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ABSTRACT

This final report presents the results of an 18-month Connecticut symposia project to confront the difficult issues facing special education and to meet those challenges through a collaborative systemic change process. The project goal, objectives, and implementation procedures are specified, and background information on five targeted topics is provided: the populations to be served, student outcomes, service delivery, personnel preparation, and funding models. For each topic, symposia participants identified specific areas of concern and a rationale for its consideration; they then specified related issues, goals, objectives, strategies, resources, and a time frame. Issues and areas of concern were analyzed to determine priorities, resulting in the following rank ordering from highest to lowest priority: funding models (especially the need for collaborative incentives by providing local discretion in programmatic decisions, and the need to examine requirements that preclude child-centered comprehensive service delivery); service delivery (especially collaboration and instruction/support services); personnel preparation (especially preservice education and teacher/related services support); population served (with special focus on continuing to serve identified students while increasing services to students who are at risk); and student outcomes (focusing on how various published goals relate to individuals with disabilities). The paper offers 12 recommendations which grew from the symposia and a plan of action outlining in detail the issues, goals, objectives, strategies, and resources for addressing these recommendations. The plan of action is meant to set the agenda for special education in Connecticut in the coming years. Appendices provide a project timeline, a list of participants, the plan of action, a mission statement, and 13 references. (JDD)

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The Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century

FINAL REPORT

Pamela Campbell, Ph.D.
Stan F. Shaw, Ed.D.
The University of Connecticut

April, 1992

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PREFACE

The Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century was an 18-month project initiated by the Commissioner of Education and implemented by the A.J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation at The University of Connecticut, in collaboration with The State Department of Education. Participants from across the State of Connecticut joined together to confront the difficult issues facing special education and take advantage of an unprecedented opportunity to meet those challenges through a collaborative systemic change process. Five topics were targeted for consideration: the populations to be served, student outcomes, service delivery, personnel preparation, and funding models. For each topic, participants identified specific areas of concern and a rationale for its consideration; they then specified related issues, goals, objectives, strategies, resources, and a time frame. The Plan of Action contained within this final report is the product of their efforts and is meant to set the agenda for special education in the State of Connecticut in the coming years.

Those who framed this plan remain committed to its implementation. It is their intent to ensure that their Plan of Action serves as a working document for policymakers, practitioners, and consumers. Through their Steering Committee, Symposia participants have affirmed their commitment to continue to serve as change agents.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Campbell,
Project Co-Director

Stan F. Shaw,
Project Co-Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank former Commissioner of Education Gerald N. Tirozzi and the Connecticut State Department of Education for providing the vision and initial support for the Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century. We express our appreciation to those who devoted long hours and contributed their unique expertise to ensure the success of this project. These individuals include over 100 competent and dedicated professionals, parents, and consumers who served as Symposia participants. It is with great respect that we recognize the immense contributions to the group process made by our extraordinary Group Facilitators: Joan McGuire, Barbara Rhein, Ben Dixon, Rick DeMatto, Lynn Pennington, Dolores Woodward, and Jackie Jacoby; and their able assistants: Karen Decker, Deb Hultgren, Kay Norlander, and Audrey Ald. We are especially grateful to the East Hartford Board of Education; the staff at the East Hartford Middle School, Apple Computers of Glastonbury; and the Special Education Resource Center for their contributions of time, staff, and resources. We also thank the many volunteers who gave so freely of their time and expertise.

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Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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BACKGROUND

Special education in the 21st century faces unprecedented opportunities for change. The entire educational system is presently undergoing radical reforms that address the ways in which education is structured and delivered; special education, as a field, must participate in this process. Recurrent demands for higher standards and greater accountability, however, are often in direct opposition with calls to serve a more diverse, at-risk populace. These challenges continue despite diminishing resources and ongoing demands for greater fiscal restraint. Consequently, educational systems are being asked to respond more effectively, in times when they may be less able to do so. Connecticut cannot continue to look backward or rely on present policies and hope to move forward and be prepared to deliver educational services to all its students in the coming years. A Plan of Action is needed.

The Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century was initiated by the Commissioner of Education to use the prospect of a new century as an opportunity to take a proactive stance in facing and attempting to solve the complex issues in special education. The primary concern of Symposia was to identify how Connecticut can address the needs of students with disabilities in the 21st Century. Four issues--demographics, transition, school reform, and funding--framed the specific questions whose answers would provide the foundation for the plan for the future of special education in Connecticut.

Demographics

Demographic information can define special education. Changes in society (ethnicity, socioeconomic status, birthrates, and school completion) are directly related to special education policy, organization, and training. With demographic information, it is possible to consider discrepancies between policy and services, the need for definitional changes, and the potential influence of public opinion in order to formulate plans to respond to the changing ethnographic nature of society and schools.

In the coming years, Connecticut will witness increases in its resident population ages 3-21 with the greatest increase being at the elementary level. There will be greater numbers of students living in poverty, as well as those with special needs; among these will be many more students with severe disabilities. It is also expected that there will be increases in the number of students representing minorities and continuing problems in recruiting teachers who can represent these populations. Special education in the 21st century will have to be prepared to deal with these demographic trends.

Transition

Transition is typically conceived as the transition that students in special education make from high school to postsecondary education, the work place, or alternative services. However, we recognize that students with special needs make transitions throughout their academic years--transition *into* services, *within* services, and *out of* services.

Transition issues include problems resulting from the questionable utility of some categorical definitions and the increasing number of at-risk preschool children moving into special education services. School dropouts and data indicating limited transition to employment or postsecondary education have become national priorities.

School Reform

The gap between the present state of education and the need for programs to ensure economic and technical survival in the near future have led to a national movement calling for school reform. This movement has been fueled by increasing evidence of the ineffectiveness of many programs and student underachievement. The prospect of a generation of students that is unprepared to meet the demands of an international marketplace has resulted in leaders from politics, business, and education calling for changes in our present educational structures.

The issue of school reform has raised many critical problems related to the improvement of academic performance and instruction. Special education cannot afford to remain apart from these discussions as the changes planned and already implemented have a direct effect on students with special needs. More collaborative efforts are needed across disciplines (general and special education; elementary and secondary education) and areas (state mandates and teacher preparation programs).

Fiscal Issues

Fiscal issues affect the delivery of special education services in several ways. First, funding levels vary and are often unrelated to actual need. Second, priorities for research and support are determined by political pressure and often fail to support needed investigation. Third, fiscal procedures often inhibit the delivery of support where it is most needed.

The ongoing economic issues facing the State of Connecticut and demands for educational productivity present very real threats to the continued funding of special education programs. As Connecticut faces a difficult fiscal crisis,

local governments and state agencies are being forced to reduce their budgets. Special education must be prepared to address the issues of funding priorities.

Those concerned and involved in education must now assume responsibility for creative problem-solving, forceful decision-making, and courageous program implementation in order to determine priorities and policies for the 21st Century. The implications of demography, transition, school reform, and fiscal issues have critical significance and frame five questions that require consideration in order to move toward a Plan of Action for special education in the 21st Century.

The questions are:

1. Who should receive special education services?
2. What are the expected outcomes of special education and related services?
3. What types of related services and collaboration will be needed to deliver special education programs and services?
4. What will the future personnel needs be in special education?
5. What are the models for alternative cost funding of special education services?

In 1991, the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Education boldly initiated the Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century to provide a forum for deliberating these questions. The details and results of the Symposia are described in the following section.

IMPLEMENTATION

Given the magnitude of the problems; the range of agencies, organizations, and individuals needed to develop and implement a solution; and the limited availability of resources, a systematic approach to change is needed. The Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century was conceived to involve a broad constituency in a proactive process of systemic statewide planning to address the future of students with special needs. The A.J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation at The University of Connecticut formulated the process that brought together more than 100 education leaders from virtually every relevant agency, organization, and advocacy group in the State. The participants met six times over a period of seven months to review and analyze complex education issues. Their discussions incorporated information from national experts who included Dr. Bob Algozzine, Dr. Bob Audette, Dr. Jim Ysseldyke, Dr. Catherine Morsink, Dr. Richard Simpson, and Dr. William Hartman. Through meetings in small and large groups, participants developed written plans specifying changes that must take place in the nineties to prepare for a Plan of Action to be implemented in the 21st century.

RESULTS

The purpose of the Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century was to develop a Plan of Action that would address five topics--population to be served, student outcomes, service delivery, personnel preparation, and funding models. This task was given to a large and diverse group which was concerned about students with disabilities within the State. Both the process that was used to create consensus out of diversity and the product that was developed by participants warranted evaluation.

Process Evaluation

An average of 84 participants (81%) attended each of the six Symposia sessions. In a follow-up survey, 75% indicated that the Symposia process was effective.

Most revealing was the data indicating that while participants perceived others (the State Department of Education and Facilitators) as being in charge of the process in the initial stages (Days 1 & 2); by the final sessions (Days 5 & 6), participants believed that they *owned* or were responsible for the product. The participants' ownership of the process was further evidenced by the voluntary formation of a 21 member Steering Committee to allow participants to continue to collaborate to implement the Plan of Action.

Product Evaluation

Eighty-one percent (81%; N=68) of the participants completed an evaluation of their "agreement" with the 61 Goals and their assessment of the "importance" of the 139 Objectives from the Plan of Action. A seven-point scale was used with 1 being *strongly disagree/unimportant* and 7 being *strongly agree/very important*. It was believed that a seven point scale would provide the

best opportunity to detect any variability among the responses. Individual means and standard deviations were calculated for each goal and objective and first inspected with respect to the total plan. Despite a discrete seven-point scale, there was little variability; respondents *strongly agreed* with the goals and considered the objectives to be *very important*. Overall, 79% of the goals and 78% of the objectives were rated at or above 6.0; no goal or objective was rated lower than 5.0.

The consensus evident from this overall analysis provides further evidence of the effectiveness of the process in that participants obviously reached consensus. However, this analysis would not be helpful in setting priorities for implementing the Plan of Action. Therefore, means were collapsed within issues and areas of concern to determine whether priorities could be detected across topics. This analysis revealed that respondents considered Topic V: Funding Models to be the highest priority (6.5), followed by Topics III: Service Delivery (6.4), IV: Personnel Preparation (6.2), I: Student Population (6.1), and II: Student Outcomes (6.0) (see Table 1). Respondents consider the definition of the population to be served and student outcomes to be of less importance than determining funding structured to support service delivery and the preparation of personnel.

Further analysis of these data was undertaken to determine whether priorities existed within topics. Means were averaged within Areas of Concern. Areas of Concern in which both high agreement and importance were noted are included in Table 1, together with their goals. In the following discussion, within topic priorities are delineated, as are items that are unique and worthy of consideration and discussion.

Table 1
Symposia Priorities Across and Within Topics

Priority	Score	Topic	Area of Concern	Goals	Agreement*	Importance**
1	6.5	V. Funding Models	Need for collaborative incentives, partnerships, and flexibility. Requirements that preclude integrated/comprehensive service delivery that is child-centered, family-focused, and community-based.	Redefinition of funding formulas to provide for greater local discretion in decisions that are programmatic and student-based. Examination of relevant issues that deter addressing this concern.	6.5	6.5
2	6.4	III. Service Delivery	B. Collaboration C. Instruction/Support Services	Collaborative partnerships within and between school, home, and community. Identification/creation of instructional/curricula, support/technological services in mainstream learning environments.	6.8 6.6	6.7 6.6
3	6.2	IV. Personnel Preparation	A. Preservice education/personnel preparation B. Teacher/Related Services	Teachers/administrators with competencies as generalists and specialists. Ongoing professional development of presently employed staff.	6.6 6.4	6.6 6.2
4	6.1	I. Population Served		Continued service to students identified under federal and state regulations. Establish process for local districts to serve "at-risk" students.	6.7 6.3	6.5 6.3
5	6.0	II. Student Outcomes		Clarification of how goals of SBE, CCL, and America 2000 reflect desired outcomes for students with disabilities.	6.4	6.0

Each item was evaluated on a seven point scale with 7 being

* strongly agree

**very important

Priority 1: Funding Models

Funding was rated as the first priority in the overall analysis; respondents were in high agreement (6.5) with goals to redefine funding formulas so that local decisions can be programmatic, student-based, and provide for greater local discretion (6.5). Participants highly agreed (6.4) with the goal to examine relevant issues that impede integrated/comprehensive service delivery that is child-centered, family-focused, and community-based. A review of this portion of the plan would suggest that flexibility and equity are key components in the determination of a functional and appropriate funding model for Connecticut.

Priority 2: Service Delivery

Respondents identified two Areas of Concern within this topic as priorities. They are B. Collaboration and C. Instruction/Support Services.

Collaboration

Recognizing the need for partnerships between schools and communities to effectively meet the needs of diverse student populations, respondents strongly agreed (6.8) with the goals of forming those partnerships within schools for the benefit of all students and creating a collaborative service delivery model within schools that provides appropriate educational programs and services to all students. Respondents also strongly agreed (6.7) with the second goal of creating partnerships between the school, home, and community.

Instruction/Support Services

Recognizing the need for an effective and integrated system of instruction and support services to address the individual needs of all students, participants specified seven goals. With respect to curricula/student services, respondents were in high agreement (6.5) with the goals that include the identification/creation of curricula and support services to meet the needs

of a diverse student population in both general and special education. With respect to learning environment, respondents highly agreed (6.6) with the goal of providing general education environments that are conducive to learning for all students. In the area of instructional approaches, respondents highly agreed (6.7) with the goals of applying instructional strategies to enable all students to learn, developing specialized educational procedures/methodologies, and utilizing support services to enable all students to benefit from instruction. Regarding technology, respondents were also in high agreement (6.4) with the goal of utilizing a variety of technologies to maximize learning.

Priority 3: Personnel Preparation

Personnel preparation was rated as the third highest (6.2) priority among the five topics. Two areas of concern were selected as priorities: A. Preservice Education/Personnel Preparation and C. Teacher and Related Services Support.

Preservice Education/Personnel Preparation

Respondents strongly agreed (6.6) with the goals of preparing all teachers to become learning generalists prior to specializing; examining and revising (when necessary) knowledge, attitudes, and competencies necessary for all potential teachers; and defining criteria that will be used to measure competencies. They also agreed with the goal of preparing administrators to meet the requirements of leadership in the area of special education.

Teacher and Related Services Support

Respondents recognized the need for comprehensive support of general, special, and related services staff to receive ongoing training in the use of innovative intervention/instructional strategies. They were in high agreement (6.4) with the goals in this area and considered the objectives to be very

important (6.2). The first goal was to provide a faculty and ancillary staff that are current in knowledge and methods for working with all students (rated 6.4 in agreement).

A second goal (rated 6.4 in agreement) was to develop an understanding of roles and responsibilities among general, special, and related services staff. A third goal (rated 6.4 in agreement) was to provide comprehensive and ongoing training programs for paraprofessionals and tutors working directly with students with all exceptionalities. A fourth goal (rated 6.4 in agreement) was to increase communication and awareness among schools, home, and communities.

Neither of the remaining areas of concern (B. Personnel Selection and Recruitment, D. Inservice, and E. Certification), nor their goals and objectives were rated as priorities for consideration or implementation. Thus, the message may be that, for presently employed personnel, content deserves more consideration than the way in which it is delivered (process).

Priority 4: Student Population

Within this topic, rated as the fourth in overall priority (6.1), there were two goals that were rated as priorities by respondents. The first was to continue to serve students identified under present federal and state regulations (rated 6.7 in agreement); and the second, to establish a process to empower local districts to serve students who are at risk (rated 6.3 in agreement).

Respondents were in less agreement (5.2) with the goal of establishing clear parameters for identifying and serving students who are gifted and talented; they also considered the objectives of clarifying who is gifted and talented and designing a service delivery model for these students as less

important (5.1) than all other goals and objectives, respectively. Clearly, there was the perception among the participants that this population is a lower priority within special education.

Priority 5: Student Outcomes

Of the two areas of concern within this topic, only one was identified as a priority--A. The lack of consensus on educational outcomes: whether they should be the same for all students. Respondents were in high agreement (6.4) with the goal of clarifying how the goals of the State Board of Education (SBE), Common Core of Learning (CCL), and America 2000 reflect desired outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

SYMPOSIA RECOMMENDATIONS

The quantitative and qualitative evaluation data provided by Symposia participants strongly support several recommendations. The strategies and resources for addressing these tasks are outlined in detail in the Plan of Action.

1. Change is possible through a bottomup systemic statewide process.

A diverse, yet representative, group of individuals came together for a common purpose. They acknowledged their diversity, addressed complex issues, and reached consensus. The process developed for the Connecticut Symposia provided both the structure and flexibility to allow the participants to reach their goal--a Plan of Action for the next century. This process should serve as a model for future change initiatives.

2. Funding is the primary concern.

In order to address the goals of the Plan of Action; flexible, programmatic, and student-based funding formulas that provide greater local discretion and agency collaboration are needed. Factors that presently impede integrated and comprehensive service delivery that is student-centered, family-focused, and community-based must be investigated. Funding formulas must allow special education and related services personnel to serve students with disabilities in general education classrooms and support general education interventions for these students as well.

3. Every student is entitled to appropriate educational services.

The intent is to serve all students well; yet, the process remains less clear. The Plan of Action suggests the need to rethink the implementation of current mandates and service delivery systems.

4. Students identified under current special education mandates must be served.

The gains that have been made in delivering services to students with special needs must not be undermined. Services guaranteed by current federal and state mandates must be ensured. Categories of disability

should be retained to protect mandated services for students with disabilities.

5. Categories of disability are not relevant to service delivery.

Labeling programs, teachers, or classrooms is not productive educational practice. Service delivery should be based on instructional need as specified by the goals and objectives in Individual Educational Plans. Assessment of each student's strengths and weaknesses, not categorical factors, should determine service delivery.

6. An increasingly diverse population of at-risk students must also be served.

Educators in general and special education must collaborate to better serve students who are at-risk of not prospering in the education system and for whom services are not currently mandated. Mechanisms for collaboration between general and special education must be enhanced in order to foster effective programming for these students.

7. Preservice preparation must provide integrated programs in which general, special, and related services personnel are prepared to serve all students by working collaboratively throughout their training.

Coursework and experiences must first provide all personnel with competencies as generalists prior to developing competencies as specialists. Administrators must have coursework and experience in working with students who are at-risk, disabled, and representative of the increasing diversity in schools.

8. New partnerships are needed to deliver services more effectively.

Collaboration within and across agencies, universities, schools, classrooms parents, communities, and the State Department of Education must be facilitated.

9. What's already working must be recognized and more broadly implemented.

It cannot be said that Plan of Action goals and objectives are unrealistic because most are already being implemented in various schools, colleges, and agencies throughout the State. There are many successful models and programs that should continue and can serve as strategies and resources for service delivery in the future. Collaborative consultation, team teaching, teacher assistance teams, professional development center partnerships, and cross-agency/school district initiatives have proven to be effective models that deserve extensive replication throughout the State.

10. The Plan of Action must be implemented immediately.

In order to be ready to meet the needs of all students in the next century, the Plan of Action requires immediate attention. Implementation by the State Department of Education and other State agencies will be fostered by the broad constituency represented in the Symposia Steering Committee.

11. General education must be involved in future planning and implementation of the Plan of Action.

The Connecticut Symposia was an opportunity for those directly concerned about students with special needs to address the critical issues facing special education and come to consensus. It is now critical to extend this process to a broad range of general education personnel—classroom teachers, principals, parents, superintendents, and agency representatives. The implementation of the Plan of Action will require new initiatives involving extensive dialogue with general education personnel.

12. General and special education must work collaboratively to define outcomes that are relevant for all students.

School reform initiatives, such as America 2000, may encourage elements (e.g., national curriculum, standardized testing, and higher graduation requirements) that may have a negative impact on students with disabilities or other learning differences. Solutions that are equitable for students, regardless of their place on the academic continuum, must be determined collaboratively by all educators. Special education personnel must be active participants in the school reform movement.

Conclusion

Our primary concern has been to identify how the field can work with other constituencies to address the needs of all students who are at-risk, both now and in the 21st Century. It is hoped that both the Symposia process and its product--the Plan of Action--will encourage others to use the prospect of a new century as an opportunity to take a proactive stance in facing and attempting to solve complex issues in education. It is hoped that the lessons learned and the quality of the product will serve as a template so other regions, states, or constituencies can replicate this approach to systemic change. Although debate, research, and information dissemination are encouraged; we believe it is time for schools, colleges, state agencies, professional organizations, and advocacy groups to seek solutions collaboratively. The alternative to working together to develop productive consensus is to allow others to determine the future of special education.

FOREWORD

The prospect of a new century offers an exceptional opportunity for those concerned with the future of education in the coming years. For those of us who are particularly invested in the education of individuals with disabilities, the challenge is unprecedented. While we now have 25 years of experience in providing the best education possible for students with disabilities, we recognize that we must continue to modify and enhance our skills. We also face unique challenges brought about by calls for school reform, a changing social structure, and limited fiscal and personnel resources. It is now time for us to form new partnerships to seek solutions to these complex issues.

The Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century was a bold initiative to give this responsibility to those who would be responsible for its implementation. Participants were charged with developing a Plan of Action that would serve as a blueprint for change, both in the present decade and into the next century. The results of their work call for creative thinking in the development of new funding structures; continued services to individuals with disabilities, as well as the recognition of new populations who are "at-risk" for school failure; and new collaborations among schools, families, communities, universities, and the State. This Plan of Action builds upon programs and structures that are currently successful and suggests new opportunities for improving services.

The Connecticut Symposia Plan of Action provides an ambitious agenda for special education. Its implementation requires collaborative efforts from all of us. We encourage you to join with the Steering Committee and the State Department of Education as they initiate plans for its implementation.

BACKGROUND

Special education in the 21st century faces unprecedented opportunities for change. The entire educational system is presently undergoing radical reforms that address the ways in which education is structured and delivered; special education, as a field, must participate in this process. Recurrent demands for higher standards and greater accountability, however, are often in direct opposition to calls to serve a more diverse, at-risk populace. These challenges continue despite diminishing resources and ongoing demands for greater fiscal restraint. Consequently, educational systems are being asked to respond more effectively in times when they may be less able to do so. If Connecticut hopes to move forward and be prepared to deliver educational services to all its students in the coming years, we cannot continue to look backward or rely on present policies. A plan of action is needed (Shaw & Campbell, 1992).

Those concerned with the effective education of students with special needs confront many complex issues. Some have tried to identify trends in special education that should direct planning for the future. Putnam and Bruininks (1986) have suggested that the current emphasis on least restrictive environments and cost-effective instructional interventions will continue, along with an ongoing federal government role in regulation and policy making. At the same time, the placement of greater numbers of students with special needs in mainstream classrooms may be stalled by demands for academic standards and a national curriculum. While some might view this dangerous time as a crisis, others, such as Morsink (1990), believe we are at a *turning point*, and have an unparalleled opportunity for growth and change.

The Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century was a project initiated by the Commissioner of Education to use the prospect of a new century as an opportunity to take a proactive stance in facing and attempting to solve the complex issues in special education. The product of the Symposia was to be a blueprint for The State of Connecticut to address the needs of students with disabilities in the 21st Century. The Department of Education identified the issues and delineated the questions. A process was then defined whereby Connecticut could begin to develop a plan for the future not only for the year 2000, but also for the intervening decade (Campbell & Shaw, 1991). Four issues--demographics, transition, school reform, and funding--framed the specific questions whose answers would provide the foundation planning the future of special education in Connecticut.

The Issues

Demographics

Demographic information can define special education. Changes in society (ethnicity, socioeconomic status, birthrates, and school completion) are directly related to special education policy, organization, and personnel preparation. With demographic information, it is possible to use discrepancies between policy and services, the need for definitional changes, and the potential influence of public opinion to formulate responses to the changing ethnographic nature of society and schools.

Although Connecticut has the highest per capita income (\$20,980), it has several of the poorest cities in the nation. Hartford ranks 4th, New Haven - 7th, and Bridgeport - 27th. These are cities populated by many residents who are non-English speaking (28%), single parents (46%), and living in poverty

(20%). Residents of these three cities represent 13% of the state's total population, 13.1% of the school-aged population (K-12), and 55.8% of those on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

It is expected that the total minority population in Connecticut will increase from 23.6% in 1989 to 30.9% by the year 2000, with Hispanics (13.7%) and Blacks (13.4%) comprising the largest groups. There has, however, been little change in minority representation in special education in the last three years. During the 1987-1988 school year, 22.2% of students with special needs were members of a minority with the largest groups being Black (13.1%) and Hispanic (8.0%) students. Similar representation of minorities (23.2%) is found among students in the general student population.

It would be expected that Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport would have the greatest needs for educational services based on the density, diversity, and poverty of the population. Substance abuse, poor nutrition, substandard living conditions, greater mobility, and inadequate health care are associated with high rates of disability, low rates of academic achievement, inadequate parental support, and difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff (Special Education in Connecticut, 1989). One specific example is the apparent correlation between low scores on Connecticut Mastery tests by students who live in districts (inner cities and rural areas) in which there is the greatest poverty (Special Education in Connecticut, 1989).

A related concern is the underrepresentation of minorities among special education teachers. The Task Force on Minority Professionals in Special Education (Dyce, 1988) reported that, nationally, only four percent of enrollees in special education preservice training programs were Black and less than two percent were Hispanic. In Connecticut, minority special education students (22.2%) are underrepresented by minority special education teachers

(4.9%), while Caucasian special education students (77.8%) are overrepresented by Caucasian special education teachers (95.1%) (Special Education in Connecticut, 1989).

In the coming years, Connecticut will witness increases in its resident population ages 3-21 with the greatest increase being at the elementary level. There will be greater numbers of students living in poverty as well as those with special needs; among these will be many more students with severe disabilities. It is also expected that there will be increases in the number of students representing minorities and continuing problems in recruiting teachers who can represent these populations. Special education in the 21st century will have to be prepared to deal with these demographic trends.

Transition

Transition is typically conceived as the transition that students in special education make from high school to postsecondary education, the work place, or alternative services. However, we recognize that students with special needs make transitions *throughout* their academic years--*transitions into* services, *within* services, and *out of* services.

Transitioning Into Services

Transitioning *into* services occurs whenever students are identified as having special needs and individual educational programs begin. Confusion continues as to eligibility for services due to the ongoing lack of clarity, questionable utility, and disagreement on categorical definitions. The endless discussion about definitions has been pervasive across organizations and constituencies at both national and state levels for more than a decade.

P.L. 99-457, mandating services for children with special needs from age three-five, has not only raised prevalence rates, but also enabled a population

with more severe disabilities to transition into special education services. Children with complex physical and multiple impairments and medical needs due to spina bifida, cerebral palsy, neurological impairments, autism, drugs, and communicable diseases are now being identified at younger ages.

In addition, there has been an alarming increase in the number of children born with neurological impairments due to drug addiction at birth. It is estimated that annually, in Connecticut, over 12,000 crack babies were identified (with the assumption that a maximum of 50% of actual incidence is reported).

Transitioning Within Services

Students in special education must transition *within* services as well. Changes in their education program result either as a consequence of their performance or changes in grade level. When *within* service transitions are not managed effectively, the progress that students make may be undermined or even undone.

Some children make transitions between special services at very young age when they transfer from a program for children under the age of three into a preschool program. Here, transition steps must be identified on individual family service plans (IFSP's). Others make transitions *within* services when they transfer from a preschool program into a public school program.

Many older students face a transition into a supportive program at the postsecondary level. These programs may include a vocational/trade school or two- or four-year college. While 56% of youth in general enroll in postsecondary education or training, only 15% of those with disabilities are likely to attend. Obviously, our services to these students warrant improvement.

Transitioning Out of Services

Will (1984) defined the transition *out of* services as a process that encompasses high school, graduation, additional postsecondary education or adult services, and the first years of employment. Successful transition from school to work requires students to use a variety of services and experiences that lead to and sustain employment. When students fail to make the transition out of services successfully, there is enormous cost to the individual students, their families, and society at large. Due to the failure of 67% of all Americans with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 to make the transition to the world of work, Rusch and Phelps (1987) have urged that focusing on the transition from school to work be a national priority.

The numbers of students with disabilities who are leaving the system without diplomas is increasing and placing additional financial burdens on the State. Students who dropout typically continue to experience a wide range of learning and adjustment problems as they become involved in delinquent activities, face unemployment, and live in greater poverty. They are more likely to be dependent on society, particularly in a rapidly changing and more restrictive job market. Kaufman, Kameenui, Birman, and Danielson (1990) have asserted that students are dropping out of school, not just special education, and that this is a failure of education as a whole, not just special education, to be considered in the broader context economic, cultural, and social issues.

The transitions that students must make *into, within, and out of* special education services continue to present issues that affect policy formation, service delivery, and personnel preparation. The calls for school reform discussed in the following section, is directly related to the issues raised by transitions.

School Reform

The gap between the present state of education and the need for programs to ensure economic and technical survival in the near future have led to a national movement calling for school reform. This movement has been fueled by increasing evidence of the ineffectiveness of many programs and student underachievement. The prospect of a generation of students that is unprepared to meet the demands of an international marketplace has resulted in leaders from politics, business, and education calling for changes in our present educational structures.

Typically, educational reform has focused on identifying national/state goals, raising academic and behavioral standards, using normative assessment to measure performance, making resources dependent on performance, and fostering local autonomy (Felt, 1985). Generally, these initiatives are reactive statements to declining academic achievement rather than proactive efforts to meet the diverse needs of all students. They also seem to be top-down responses that propose the standardization of testing, teaching, and curriculum for all students. Many states, including Connecticut, are raising high school graduation requirements and implementing standardized testing to measure student achievement.

The greater emphasis on quality raises legitimate concerns about *equity*, especially for students with disabilities; the emphasis on higher standards and more standardized methods of evaluation, could easily be *exclusionary*. Shaw et al., (1990) have suggested that students with disabilities may be at even greater risk for placement in more restrictive environments and programming that is less appropriate as a result of reform initiatives. To avert this possibility, Judy Shrag, Director of the Education Department's Office of Education Programs, has advocated for greater

involvement by special educators in the process of school reform--a position recently supported by leaders at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (Education of the Handicapped, 1990).

There are those who believe that the changes in the way we educate children must be preceded by reform in the ways we educate and certify teachers (Pugach, 1987). Consequently, there has also been a movement to professionalize the teaching profession by raising standards and monitoring performance more closely. Connecticut has recently addressed the improvement of education through the Education Enhancement Act of 1986. This act provided for the enhancement of salaries (now second highest in the nation), the raising of certification standards, the development of teacher preparation initiatives that include evaluation, career initiatives that provide for a more stringent certification process, and ongoing professional development.

Other reform initiatives are school-based and focus on local site-based management, the empowerment of teachers in the decision-making process, a high degree of parental access, and the individualization of instruction. The body of literature on effective schools supports concomitant school and classroom organization with high visibility (administrative/teacher), appropriately high performance expectations, ongoing monitoring (teacher/student performance), an emphasis on instruction, high rates of successful performance, and immediate feedback. In Connecticut, an ongoing program of professional development and peer review has been implemented to ensure greater local control of the quality of teaching.

Innovative university teacher preparation programs, such as the five-year Integrated Bachelor's/Master's Program at the University of Connecticut, are improving the quality of preservice teacher preparation. Throughout their programs, future teachers collaborate with their peers in the university

classroom and their mentors in their clinic placements. Their goal is to become reflective analytic professionals who are experienced change agents prepared to address issues common across school settings.

School reform, while seeking to improve academic performance and instruction, has raised many critical problems. Special education cannot afford to remain apart from these discussions as the changes proposed and already implemented have a direct effect on students with special needs. More collaborative efforts are needed across disciplines (general and special education; elementary and secondary education) and areas (state mandates and teacher preparation programs).

Fiscal Issues

Fiscal issues affect the delivery of special education services in several ways. First, funding levels vary and are often unrelated to actual need. Second, priorities for research and support are determined by political pressure and fail to support needed investigation. Third, fiscal procedures often inhibit the delivery of support where it is most needed.

Connecticut uses percentage matching, one of five funding mechanisms used by states (flat grants, minimum funding, percentage matching, and full funding of excess costs) as the mechanism by which local districts are reimbursed. Only four other states use percentage matching; 34 states use either flat grants or minimum funding. Percentage matching enables the State (SEA) to pay a percentage of LEA expenditures with an adjustment for the capacity of the local education agency (LEA) to support programming. The level of need is determined by the State. The benefits of this mechanism are the potential for greater equity across districts, adequacy of reimbursement for services, and flexibility for the distribution of funds. However, the system is difficult to

interpret and inherently inefficient. There are few incentives to control costs and it fosters great amounts of paperwork. Its most glaring weakness is the lack of encouragement to serve students with special needs in general education settings.

Funding for special education is supported through the Excess Cost Grant (ECG) and the Regular Special Education Grant (RSEG). Between 1986 and 1988, the ECG increased an average of 32.9%, with an anticipated reduction to 15% in the following two years. Meanwhile, the RSEG increased by an average of 13.8% per year from 1982-1988.

The ongoing economic issues facing the State of Connecticut and demands for educational productivity present very real threats to the continued funding of special education programs. As Connecticut faces a difficult fiscal crisis, local governments and state agencies are being forced to reduce their budgets. Special education must begin to focus on funding priorities through creative problem-solving, forceful decision-making, and courageous program implementation.

The Questions

The implications of demography, transition, school reform, and fiscal issues have critical significance and have framed five questions that require consideration in order to move toward a plan of action for special education in the the 21st Century.

The questions are:

1. Who should receive special education services?
2. What are the expected outcomes of special education and related services?
3. What types of related services and collaboration will be needed to deliver special education programs and services?

4. What will the future personnel needs be in special education?
5. What are the models for alternative cost funding of special education services?

Who Should Receive Special Education Services?

Given the well-documented increasing diversity of students (severity and type of need) and the increasing numbers of restraints (fiscal and accountability mandates), it is logical for those concerned with the education of students with special needs to ask whether priorities and limitations may be indicated and/or required in order to deliver services within the best intentions of the law and reasonable ethical accommodations. Educators, parents, legislators, and administrators may find themselves seeking answers to questions related to who should receive special education services.

- With larger numbers of more medically involved and severely disabled students entering public schools and real limitations on financial and personnel resources, who is entitled to special education service prioritization?
- As students with more severe disabilities enter public schools, how can we continue to meet the needs of those with less or least severe disabilities? Might these students be forced out of special education?
- Given the problems associated with identifying students with learning disabilities (particularly those with mild learning disabilities), is it possible that, without a definitive identification that accommodates the heterogeneous nature of this disability, these students may be forced out of services to which they are entitled?

- Should students receiving the majority of their education in general education classrooms still be considered as special education students? What pressures might this place on personnel who are not adequately prepared to reach these students?
- In Connecticut, services for students who are gifted and talented are funded by special education. What will happen to these students if priorities are changed?
- As new populations are identified, mandated (birth to three), considered (the disadvantaged--poor, rural, urban ethnically different), and finally recognized (postsecondary), how can we decide who to serve within the parameters of federal, state, and district mandates?
- Do we need to redefine students without disabilities and the types of services to which they are entitled before considering the needs of those with disabilities?

What are the Expected Outcomes of Special Education and Related Services?

Given the increasing number of students who are dropping out of school, aging out of special education programming, or simply disappearing, questions are being raised as to the outcomes that are appropriate for students with special needs.

- Is it time to reconsider present graduation requirements and the types of diplomas offered by secondary schools?
- What systematic procedures can we use to identify potential dropouts earlier in their school careers?
- Are there more effective programs to encourage retention?

- How can we acquire knowledge and awareness of the factors, such as personal crises and milder disabilities, that may precipitate dropping out?
- Do we need to reconsider the effectiveness of the Individual Educational Program (IEP), the IEP planning process, and programmatic options for students with milder disabilities?
- How can we prepare students for job success and independent living?
- Can we develop better Individual Transition Plans (ITPs)?
- How can we facilitate transitions to postsecondary programs for those seeking to continue their education?
- What community and student outreach activities and planning for transition services can be implemented in earlier grades?

What Types of Related Services and Collaboration will be Needed to

Deliver Special Education Programs and Services?

Given the increasing number of students with special needs being mainstreamed, questions are being raised as to the best way to deliver services equitably.

- Under what conditions can instruction best be delivered and what are the roles of general and special education teachers?
- How are collaborative models for teaming best delivered?
- What are the alternate forms of prereferral services that are most viable?
- What are the most appropriate service delivery models for students with mild, moderate or severe disabilities--pullout programs, short-term special education classes, self-contained classrooms, or resource rooms?

What Will the Future Personnel Needs be in Special Education?

Given the changing student population, questions are being asked as to modifications that may be needed in personnel preparation.

- What is the best way to prepare preservice teachers and to foster the ongoing professional development of teachers in the field?
- How can colleges and universities create more collaborative relationships with Local Education Agencies (LEAs)?
- What competencies will be needed by teachers in the next century?
- When and how should special education programming be integrated into a preservice preparation?
- How can personnel shortages be linked to preparation programs to ensure an ongoing supply of teachers in the field?
- Given high standards for admission and certification, is it possible to attract qualified personnel and minority applicants?
- Should we consider alternative certifications?

What are the Models for Alternative Cost Funding of Special Education Services?

Given the increased demands for results amidst diminishing resources, questions are being raised as to alternatives to the present funding structure.

- What is the most efficacious way to deliver special education programs?
- Should general education pay for students who are mainstreamed?
- Should special education funds be categorical or service-based?
- Are there legal issues that must be considered when suggesting changes in funding procedures?

Connecticut Symposia

The Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Education boldly initiated the Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century to provide a forum for deliberating these questions. The details and results of the Symposia process are described in the following section.

IMPLEMENTATION

Project Overview

The Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century began in March of 1991 and concludes with the development of this final report in April of 1992. The goal was to involve a broad constituency in a proactive process of systemic statewide planning to develop a blueprint--a plan of action--to meet the future needs of students with disabilities in the coming years. The A. J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation at The University of Connecticut formulated the process (Campbell & Shaw, 1991) that brought together more than 100 education leaders from virtually every relevant agency, organization, and advocacy group in the State. The participants met six times over a period of seven months to review and analyze the complex education issues concerning effective education for students with special needs. These meetings included formal presentations, as well as discussions in smaller working groups, wherein participants developed a Plan of Action that specifies changes that must take place in the 90's and into the 21st century. In the following sections, the project goal and objectives, planning, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination are described.

Project Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of this project was to provide policy makers, implementers, consumers, and educators with a Plan of Action for special education beginning in the year 2000. In order to reach this goal, however, the final plan needed to outline changes and activities to take place in the nineties in order to be prepared for action in the 21st century. In order to meet this goal, the following objectives were attained:

- a. the production of five major position papers by national experts, each accompanied by reaction papers.
- b. the implementation of Symposia designed to address each of the five questions.
- c. the finalization and evaluation of Symposia products for submission to the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- d. the dissemination of position papers, reaction papers, Plan of Action, and evaluation data to state and national constituencies.

Planning

The Symposia project began with planning sessions between The University of Connecticut and the State Department of Education in March of 1991. During these meetings, the Symposia process, participants, expert information, site, and facilitators/group leaders were determined.

Symposia Process

In order for this project to succeed, a process was needed by which change might be considered, explored, enhanced, supported, and articulated. From an extensive review and analysis of the literature, we were able to identify and synthesize four principles that are critical for effective change. Our process for bottomup systemic change is dependent on these principles--structure, flexibility, systemic inclusion, and accountability.

Structure

Structure relies on eight components that provide consistency: Purpose, Information Base, Group Composition, Process, Communication, Format, Logistics, and Administration. In the Connecticut Symposia on Special Education, the

purpose was the development of an Plan of Action for special education; an information base was provided through expert papers/presentations and participant opinion and expertise; the groups composition, leaders, and Project Co-Directors remained constant; process was facilitated by leadership training and participant ownership strategies; communication that was inter/intralevel, ongoing, immediate and dispersed was facilitated; and consistency was maintained in the format (schedule), logistics (site and services), and administration (budget and activities) of the project.

Flexibility

Flexibility is comprised of eight components, seven of which are also cited under Structure: Information Base, Group Composition, Process, Communication, Format, Logistics, and Administration. There is no flexibility in the Purpose of the Symposia. The principle of flexibility affirms that the process of change is truly a process and that each of its components are subject to change. During the Connecticut Symposia, the Information Base was expanded to include both expert and participant opinion, Group Composition reflected both participant interest and self-selection, Process and ownership varied across groups; Communication systems were used differently by individuals and groups; and Formats, Logistics, and Administration were changed to accommodate the needs of individual groups throughout the seven months of the Symposia.

Systemic Inclusion

Systemic Inclusion relies on both Intrasystem and Intersystem Components. There must be Representation, Participation, and Collaboration from every level within (intra) and between (inter) the system. In the Connecticut Symposia, the system was education and there was clear representation, participation, and collaboration from within (intra) every level and across (inter) the entire educational system. The intrasystemic component included (among others)

students/consumers representing various categories of disability, teachers, principals, supervisors, directors of special education and pupil personnel services, superintendents of schools, and agency representatives. There were also intersystemic representatives who participated and collaborated with other systems. They included parents, representatives from state agencies, advocacy groups, higher education, private schools, and community organizations; as well as the medical, legal, and social service communities.

Accountability

Accountability has two Components -- Process and Product -- and each is comprised of three strategies (dissemination, evaluation, and administration). This principle ensured that the goal and objectives of the change process was met and that change agents assumed responsibility for the process. The process used during the Connecticut Symposia was administered through adherence to timelines; it has subsequently been evaluated by participants and disseminated through presentations and articles. The products of the Symposia include the Plan of Action, a Final Report, the Executive Summary, and numerous articles disseminated to the State Department of Education, national conferences, and professional journals. Evaluation of the Plan of Action is based on participant and constituent feedback; the attainment of project goals and objectives provide a measure of accountability for the administration of the project.

Each of these components was infused into the Symposia beginning in the earliest days of collaborative planning between The University of Connecticut and The State Department of Education. A timeline of project activities is contained in Appendix A and described in detail in the following section.

Symposia Participants

A representative group of 111 individuals who shared a common commitment to the future of special education accepted an invitation from the Commissioner of

Education to participate in the Symposia (See Appendix B). This group represented a demographic cross-section of administrators, teachers, parents, agencies, universities, consumers, lawyers, medical personnel, and members of professional organizations who are involved in special education in Connecticut. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the participants represented general education in their training and experience. In accepting the invitation, the participants affirmed their commitment to attend all sessions. Evidence of their sincerity is revealed in the attendance records.

A key component throughout the Symposia was the visible commitment of those in a position to support its activities and implement its final product. Among those attending Symposia sessions were the Commissioner of Education (Dr. Gerald N. Tirozzi), the Acting Director of the Division of Support Services (Dr. Tom Gillung), the Dean of the School of Education at The University of Connecticut (Dr. Charles W. Case), the Director of the A. J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation (Dr. Orv C. Karan), the Acting Chief of the Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services (Frank Limauro) and his staff, and the Acting Deputy Commissioner for Program and Support Services (Robert I. Margolin). Consultants from the State Department of Education were also invited to attend Symposia sessions.

Expert Information

In order for Symposia participants to take informed action, there needed to be extensive information available (beyond their own personal experience and knowledge base) on each of the five topics. National and local leaders in the field of special education who could address the population to be served, expected outcomes, service delivery, personnel preparation, and funding alternatives were identified (See Appendix C). Five national experts each developed a 30-page position paper that contained an in-depth exploration of their topic and drew (as

was appropriate) from the fields of educational research, medical science, mental health, and child care. Brief (2-3 page) reaction papers were written by both national and local experts. These papers were disseminated to Symposia participants prior to the Symposium at which the topic would be addressed. In addition, at each session, additional materials were made available by The A. J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation, the Special Education Resource Center, Apple Computers, the State Department of Education, and the participants themselves.

The authors of the major papers attended the symposia session at which their topic was featured to make presentations that expanded or focused on specific aspects of their papers. They also attended and participated in working sessions as participants addressed issues related to that portion of the Plan of Action.

Symposia Site

The East Hartford Middle School (EHMS), in East Hartford, Connecticut was selected as the site for the Symposia. It was important to situate the Symposia in a location that was geographically, physically, and symbolically appropriate. East Hartford is centrally located within the State and the Middle School offered easy access for participants traveling from other cities and towns. In addition, EHMS offered an auditorium for large presentations, a media center for small group meetings, and excellent food services. The site--a school--also reflected the purpose of the Symposia. The personnel and School Board extended every courtesy and service (copying, telephone, custodial, media, parking, and security) that was necessary to successfully implement the Symposia.

Symposia Facilitators/Group Leaders

In order for the small groups to function effectively, Facilitators and Group Leaders were selected from among the participants (See Appendix B). These individuals were well-respected for their experience and expertise in the field of special education within the State. However, the primary criterion for selection was

their ability to facilitate group process in order to reach consensus. Group leaders led small groups of 10-12 individuals to identify Issues/Concerns and What's Working in relation to Topics 1-4 during two introductory sessions (Days 1 and 2). Facilitators and their assistants led larger groups (Days 3 - 6) whose purpose was to develop a Plan of Action on their topic.

Implementation

The Symposia were conducted from May-November of 1991. They were originally conceived as a series of five (5) symposia to be conducted over the course of 18 months with each session focused on the sequential consideration of each of the five topics. However, the Project Co-Directors, in consultation with the State Department of Education, reconsidered and revised this format. It was determined that Topics 1 (Population to be Served) and 2 (Student Outcomes) were complimentary, as were Topics 3 (Service Delivery) and 4 (Personnel Preparation). It was also reasoned that the discussion of Topic 5 (Funding Models) would be most logical and useful when the first four topics had been addressed. Therefore, the overall format of the Symposia was reconfigured to address Topics 1 and 2 on Day 1, Topics 3 and 4 on Day 2, and Topic 5 on Day 4, with Days 3 and 5 targeted as working sessions (See Figure 1). In the following sections, Symposia Sessions, Communication, Materials, and Products are described.

Symposia Sessions

Each Symposia session had a specific purpose that was reflected in the activities and processes scheduled. The format of certain sessions was repeated according to the specific purpose of the day.

On Days 1 and 2, the purpose was to listen to and interact with speakers who had written major papers on Topics 1 and 2, 3 and 4, respectively. Therefore, on May 9, 1991 (Day 1), Drs. Bob Algozzine and Bob Audette addressed the Population to be Served (Topic 1) and Dr. Jim Ysseldyke spoke on Student Outcomes (Topic 2). On

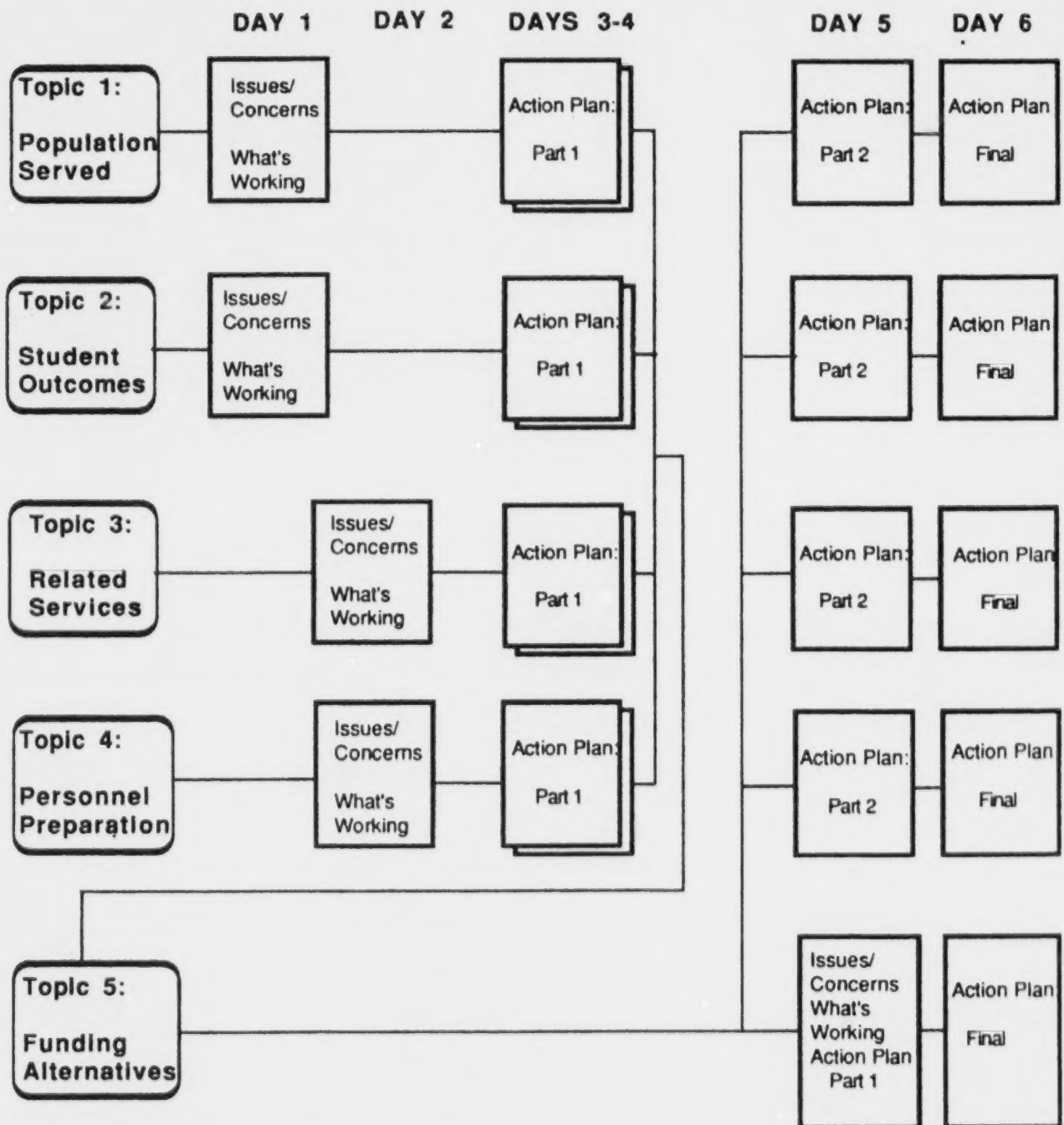
May 23, 1991 (Day 2), Dr. Richard Simpson discussed Service Delivery (Topic 3) and Dr. Catherine Morsink addressed Personnel Preparation (Topic 4). Discussion followed each presentation.

In the afternoons of Days 1 and 2, participants were divided into ten (10) demographically representative small groups, led by a Group Leader. Their goal was to identify issues and concerns related to each topic and to list programs and systems that are presently working within the State. On Day 1, groups focused first on Topic 1 and then on Topic 2; on Day 2, groups repeated this process with Topics 3 and 4. They accomplished their task through individual listings and a process of round-robin discussion by which comprehensive lists were generated from each group. The products of Days 1 and 2 were ten separate lists of 1) Issues/Concerns and 2) What's Working for each of the four topics.

Prior to Day 3 (June 17, 1992), the 10 lists of Issues/Concerns and the 10 lists of What's Working were combined and placed on four topic-specific computer disks. On Day 3, participants met in one of four groups; each group focused on one of the four groups to focus on their preferred topic. The task on Day 3 was to collapse and reorganize the Issues/Concerns provided by the total Symposia into the initial components of their Plan of Action. Using their computer disks with Macintosh computers and LCD overhead projection units, the groups collapsed and reorganized their lists to identify major areas of concern within their topic, delineate a rationale for its inclusion, and specify issues within each area of concern. Their final task was to reflect and contribute their thoughts to a Mission Statement that would accompany the Plan of Action.

At the conclusion of Day 3, many participants expressed concern that, before Topic Groups 2-4 could proceed, Topic 1 (Population Served) needed greater clarity. It was also evident that all groups needed additional time to complete the remaining components of their plans (goals and objective) prior to dealing with

Figure 1
ACTION PLAN PROCESS



funding models. Following meetings with representative participants and State Department personnel, the Project Co-Directors (with fiscal support from the State Department of Education) decided to conduct a supplementary meeting of Group 1, use the September meeting as an additional working session, postpone a discussion of funding models until October, and hold the final session in November. Group 1 met prior to Session 4 to further delineate the population to be served; the product of this meeting was provided to all participants, together with the revised timetable.

On September 23, 1992 (Day 4), an overall update and review of Symposia activities was provided by the Project Co-Directors. Further review and discussion of Group 1's progress ensued. Individual groups (Topics 1-4) then continued to refine their group's plan. The products of this session were provided to Dr. William Hartman as a basis for his presentation on October 17, 1991. Prior to this session, participants received and reviewed Dr. Hartman's paper, as well as those of his reactors. Again, supplementary materials were provided during the session.

On Day 5, the format used on Days 1 and 2 was repeated in the morning. First, Dr. Hartman spoke on funding alternatives and discussion followed. A fifth topic group was formed to develop a Plan of Action for Topic 5 - Funding Models. During the remainder of the morning, all five Topic Groups conducted brainstorming sessions in which they identified Issues/Concerns and What's Working with relation to funding special education in Connecticut. Their products were immediately communicated to Group 5. In the afternoon, the groups continued their work on their section of the Plan of Action, using the format developed for Day 3.

On November 7, 1992, Symposia participants reconvened for a final working session during which they completed action plans that contained strategies, resources, and timelines for objectives and goals within each issue. In the afternoon, as each group finished its work, the large group reconvened to share

their products and discuss the prospects for the future. There was concern that their work move forward and that subsequent action be assured. Following a verbal commitment from the Acting Director of the Division of Education Support Services, the participants formed a Steering Committee of 21 members (See Appendix B) who were charged with the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the Plan of Action. This committee was composed of individuals in a position to follow through with this responsibility.

As a final task, participants were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the Symposia process. The results of this evaluation are presented in the Results section.

Symposia Communication

Communication was critical to the success of the project. While participants worked primarily on their topic of choice, they were also invested in the total plan and reviewed information about the work of the other groups throughout the project. For example, during sessions, interim products were reproduced by project staff and immediately made available to participants. Prior to and between sessions, the Project Co-Directors provided frequent mailings to participants that contained the position and reaction papers, interim products, agenda for upcoming sessions, materials, and general symposia information.

Facilitators and Group Leaders were also provided written descriptions of their roles and responsibilities prior to Symposia sessions. In addition, debriefing sessions were conducted following Symposia sessions at which Group Leaders and Facilitators shared their successes and concerns for future sessions. Time was taken to analyze the progress of each group in order to make appropriate modifications in subsequent schedules and agenda. On several occasions, Facilitators and their assistants met between sessions for more indepth discussions of the process and its products.

Symposia Materials

The work of the participants was facilitated by the variety and comprehensiveness of materials made available to them. These materials included a Working Manual, Supplementary Materials, and Technological Support.

Working Manual

Each participant had a Working Manual. This manual contained the papers written by national experts and reactors, the agenda, supplementary materials, worksheets for each session, and working copies of the Plan of Action. The manual also contained other general information (names, addresses, position, telephone numbers of Participants, Authors, Facilitators, Group Leaders, as well as project personnel from The University of Connecticut and the State Department of Education).

Supplementary Materials

Supplementary materials were also available at each Symposia session. Comprehensive reference lists and articles were provided by the Special Education Resource Center, the A. J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation, participants, and authors.

Technological Support

For Session 3, Apple Computer provided Macintosh computers and LCD video projection units to enable participants to list and reorganize items generated during Sessions 1 and 2. This technology facilitated the collapsing of hundreds of items on each topic into several areas of concern and the immediate production and dissemination of a group's interim and final products during the session.

Symposia Products

The Symposia resulted in several products. These included the Plan of Action, a Mission Statement, a Final Report, and an Executive Summary. Each product is described below.

Plan of Action

The purpose of this project was to develop an Plan of Action that would provide a blueprint for Connecticut educators to use in the coming years to address the needs of students with disabilities. The Plan of Action is contained in Appendix D. This Plan is the participants' response to each of the five questions originally posed for this project and, within each question, contains areas of concern with a rationale, issues, goals, objectives, strategies, resources, and timelines. Final editing of this plan was completed by all participants during December of 1991.

Mission Statement

The participants also developed a Mission Statement (See Appendix E). The Mission Statement is designed to embody the purpose of the Symposia and articulate the objectives of this project. It was developed through input from participants and is designed to enhance the continued participation of and ownership of the Plan of Action by all participants.

Final Report

The products of the Symposia also include this Final Report, produced by The A. J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation. It will be disseminated to all participants, as well as to other interested individuals and agencies.

Executive Summary

Finally, an Executive Summary has been developed that summarizes the purpose, activities, products, and recommendations of this project. The Executive Summary will be made available to agencies and individuals who are concerned about the future of special education, both within Connecticut and across the nation. These individuals include local and state directors of special education, national clearinghouses and professional organizations, key personnel in state departments

of education and universities, and agencies that exist to meet the needs of students with special needs.

Evaluation

In December, 1991, the Plan of Action was sent to all participants for evaluation. Evaluation format, procedures, and analysis were developed and undertaken by Dr. Kay Norlander of the Department of Educational Psychology, in collaboration with the Project Co-Directors. Participants were asked to rate (on a seven point scale) each goal (in terms of agreement) and each objective (in terms of importance). It was believed that this information would enable the State Department of Education to set priorities for the implementation of this plan. It was also critical to provide the Steering Committee with as much information as possible in order to begin their work. The results of the evaluation are provided in the Results section.

Dissemination

The final objective of this project--dissemination--has already been and will continue to be addressed during the coming months in the form of presentations and written products. Dissemination activities focus on both the process and products of this project.

In September of 1991, the Symposia process was presented by Pam Campbell (Project Co-Director) and Diane Liebert (Project Participant) as part of a panel discussion on systemic change at the annual meeting of the Northeast Research Association in New York. In November, in collaboration with Tom Gillung (Acting Director of the Division of Education Support Services), Pam Campbell and Stan Shaw spoke at a session on the change process at a topical conference on At-Risk Learners, sponsored by the Council for Exceptional Children in New Orleans. A proposal, submitted by Stan Shaw, Pam Campbell, and Paul Flinter (Consultant,

Division of Education Support Services) has also been accepted for presentation at the International Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children in April of 1992 in Baltimore, MD. This presentation will focus on both the process and products of the Symposia.

The major papers and reaction papers produced by the Symposia authors have been revised and are currently under review for a special issue of *Remedial and Special Education* to be published in the fall of 1992. In an article by the Co-Editors (Shaw & Campbell, 1992), the bold initiative undertaken in Connecticut is cited as the foundation for this important journal issue.

The Plan of Action is currently being disseminated for further evaluation to individuals who did not participate in the Symposia and may provide different perspective. Two groups of demographically representative individuals who correspond to Symposia participants have been identified -- one, statewide, and the other, national. We hope that the opinions of individuals who were not part of the process, but are committed to special education, will provide additional data and direction for the State Department of Education and the Steering Committee.

In the coming months, additional articles and presentations will be generated by those involved in the Symposia to disseminate the important process and products of this project. In the following section, the results of the project are described.

RESULTS

The purpose of the Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century was to develop a Plan of Action that would address five topics--the population to be served, student outcomes, service delivery, personnel preparation, and funding models. This task was given to a large and diverse group concerned about students with disabilities. Both the process that was used to create consensus out of diversity and the product that was developed by participants warranted evaluation. The results of these evaluations are provided in the following sections.

Process Evaluation

While the original vision for the Symposia came from the Commissioner of Education, while support for the initiative was provided by the State Department of Education, and while the process for implementing the initiative was developed by The A. J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation, it was the Symposia participants who translated that vision into a concrete Plan of Action. During the seven months of the Symposia, very diverse individuals who shared a common concern about the future of special education worked through their differences to reach their goal--a Plan of Action for the future. Their commitment remained steadfast both during and following the Symposia and attests to the effectiveness of the process by which they were able to accomplish their task. The process can be evaluated through a review of their attendance, an analysis of survey data, and the formation of a Steering Committee.

Attendance

Of the 123 invitations extended by the Commissioner of Education in April of 1991, 111 were accepted. Many of these participants surrendered vacation days, personal time, or salary in order to participate in the Symposia. Evidence of their commitment was revealed by their attendance. An average of 84 participants

attended each of the six Symposi sessions. During the first two days of the Symposia, when four of the five major speakers were present, attendance averaged 94 participants. During the remaining (primarily working) sessions, attendance remained consistent at an average of 74 (71%) of the original participants. Even though participants had originally committed themselves to only five sessions, scheduled to end in October, 63 individuals attended the final (additional) session in November.

Survey

In a followup survey, participants were asked to complete a survey to evaluate the overall process of the Symposia. Responses were obtained from 84% of those who attended more than one Symposia session. Seventy-five percent (75%) indicated that the Symposia process was effective.

Most revealing was the data indicating that while participants perceived others (the State Department of Education and Facilitators) as being in charge of the process in the initial stages (Days 1 & 2); by the final sessions (Days 5 & 6), participants believed that they *owned* or were responsible for the product (See Figure 2). At no point during the process did participants perceive the University of Connecticut as being in control of the Symposia.

Participant comments also attest to the effectiveness of the change process:

The organization of the symposia was excellent.

It was a major professional undertaking. The group process made each phase work the best way possible.

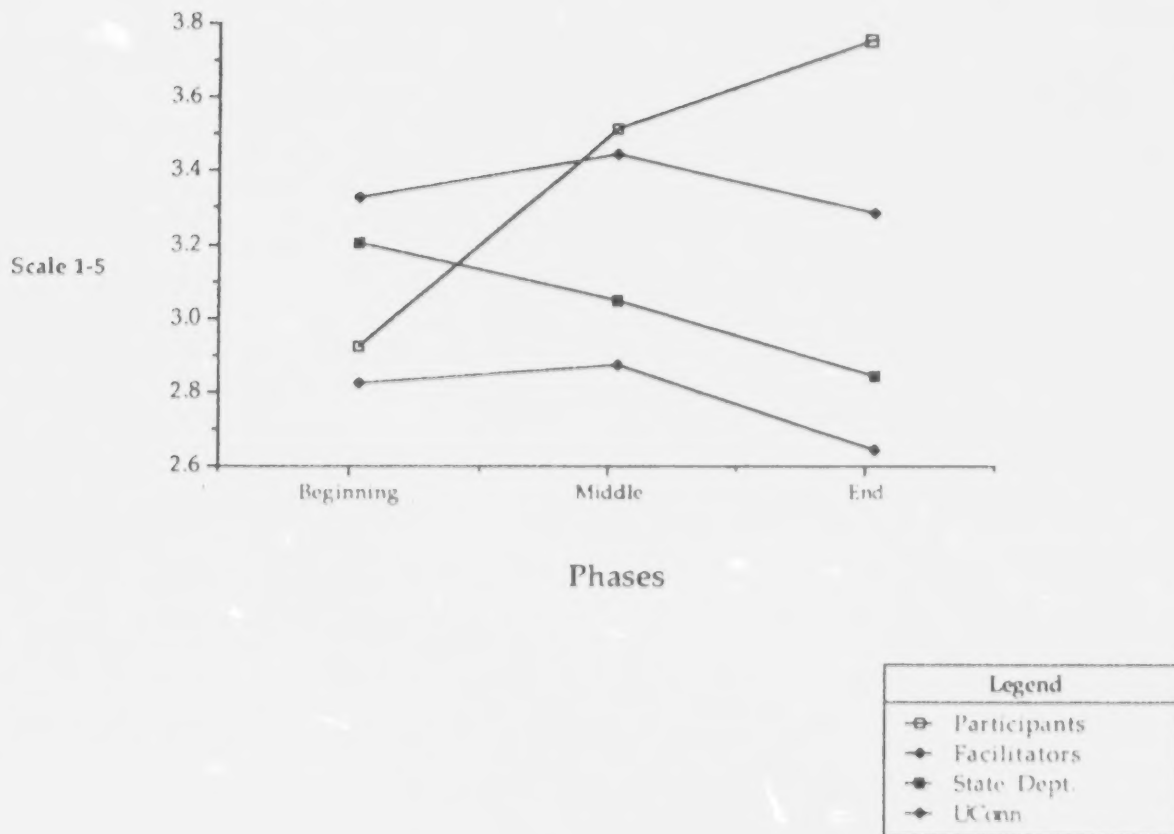
Extremely well organized and thought provoking process.

A commendable attempt to create a scholarly approach to address this extremely broad, complex, and often controversial area.

Figure 2

PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS OF CONTROL

CT Symposia on Special Education



The strongest feature of the process was interaction with diverse groups.

Networking alone will increase collaborations.

The process gives hope for future change.

The process gives hope for the future.

Steering Committee

Finally, the success of the process was evidenced by the actions of the participants at the conclusion of Session 6. Participants gathered to summarize their work and discuss how they might continue their work beyond their original commitment. They expressed their concerns that the Plan of Action would not be implemented or that they would not be involved in future activities. They decided to form a Steering Committee in order to carry their work forward. Nineteen participants volunteered to serve on this committee, co-chaired by the Co-Facilitators of the Group 5 (See Appendix B). This committee plans to meet in the Spring of 1992 to plan action it and Symposia participants might take to publicize and seek additional support for the Plan of Action.

Product Evaluation

In December 1991, the product of the Symposia was evaluated by participants. The Plan of Action was sent to the 84 participants who had attended at least three Symposia sessions. In this way, responses would be obtained from those who had participated in at least one working session. Responses were received from 68 participants—an 81% response rate.

Participants were asked to rank their *agreement* with Goals (n=61) and the *importance* of Objectives (n=139). A seven-point scale was used with 1 being *strongly disagree/unimportant* and 7 being *strongly agree/very important*. It was believed that a seven point scale would provide the best opportunity to detect any

variability among participant responses. Individual means and standard deviations were calculated for each goal and objective and first inspected with respect to the total plan. Despite a discrete seven-point scale, there was little variability; respondents *strongly agreed* with the goals and considered the objectives to be *very important*. Overall, 79% of the goals and 78% of the objectives were rated at or above 6.0; no goal or objective was rated lower than 5.0. The consensus evident from this overall analysis provides further evidence of the effectiveness of the process in that participants obviously reached consensus.

However, this overall analysis is not helpful in setting priorities for implementing the Plan of Action. Therefore, means were collapsed within issues and areas of concern to determine whether priorities could be detected across topics. This analysis revealed that respondents consider Topic V: Funding Models to be the highest priority (6.5), followed by Topics III: Service Delivery (6.4), IV: Personnel Preparation (6.2), I: Student Population (6.1), and II: Student Outcomes (6.0) (See Table 1). Respondents considered the definition of the population to be served and the student outcomes as less important than the determination of funding structures needed to support service delivery and personnel preparation.

Further analysis of these data was undertaken to determine whether priorities existed within topics. Means were averaged within Areas of Concern. Areas of Concern in which both high agreement and importance were noted are included in Table 1, together with their goals. In the following discussion, within topic priorities are delineated, as are items that are unique and worthy of consideration and discussion.

Priority 1: Funding Models

Funding was rated as the first priority in the overall analysis. Within this priority, respondents were in high agreement (6.5) with goals to redefine funding formulas so that local decisions might be programmatic, student-based, and provide

Table 1
Symposia Priorities Across and Within Topics

Priority	Score	Topic	Area of Concern	Goals	Agreement*	Importance**
1	6.5	V. Funding Models	Need for collaborative incentives, partnerships, and flexibility. Requirements that preclude integrated/comprehensive service delivery that is child-centered, family-focused, and community-based.	Redefinition of funding formulas to provide for greater local discretion in decisions that are programmatic and student-based. Examination of relevant issues that deter addressing this concern.	6.5	6.5
2	6.4	III. Service Delivery	B. Collaboration C. Instruction/Support Services	Collaborative partnerships within and between school, home, and community. Identification/creation of instructional/curricula, support/technological services in mainstream learning environments.	6.8 6.6	6.7 6.6
3	6.2	IV. Personnel Preparation	A. Preservice education/personnel preparation B. Teacher/Related Services	Teachers/administrators with competencies as generalists and specialists. Ongoing professional development of presently employed staff.	6.6 6.4	6.6 6.2
4	6.1	I. Population Served		Continued service to students identified under federal and state regulations. Establish process for local districts to serve "at-risk" students.	6.7 6.3	6.5 6.3
5	6.0	II. Student Outcomes		Clarification of how goals of SBE, CCL, and America 2000 reflect desired outcomes for students with disabilities.	6.4	6.0

Each item was evaluated on a seven point scale with 7 being

* strongly agree

**very important

for greater local discretion (6.5). They also believed the objectives to be very important (6.5). They highly agreed (6.4) with the goal to examine relevant issues that impede integrated/comprehensive service delivery that is child-centered, family-focused, and community-based. The objectives associated with the first two goals (rated 6.4 in importance) include the formation of a task force to enhance categorical funding based on an individual plan of service, support reimbursement of preventative strategies, early identification, and prereferral strategies; accommodate co-funding and co-mingling of categorical monies; provide for current year reimbursement sent directly to local boards of education; support equity based on criteria of diversity of student population, and create incentives for intradistrict general and special education collaboration and interdistrict initiatives. The objectives associated with the second goal (rated 6.4 in importance) include the establishment of a task force to consider funding sources, the elimination of competition among agencies for limited funds, the identification of new sources of funding, the development of an awareness of available resources, the development of resources to keep students in the *community and least restrictive environment*; the provision of incentives for interagency cooperation, a review of models for integrating services, and the development of a political action group. It is worthwhile to recall Hartman's suggestion that, once priorities for funding have been identified, it is possible to develop an appropriate funding model. A review of this portion of the plan would suggest that flexibility and equity are key components in the determination of a functional and appropriate funding model for Connecticut.

Priority 2: Service Delivery

Respondents identified two Areas of Concern within this topic as priorities. They are B. Collaboration and C. Instruction/Support Services.

Collaboration

Recognizing the need for partnerships within and between schools and communities to effectively meet the needs of diverse student populations, respondents strongly agreed (6.8) with the goals of forming those partnerships for the benefit of all students and creating a collaborative service delivery model to provide for appropriate educational programs and services to all students. They also rated the objectives as very important (6.7). These objectives included securing a commitment for collaboration from school boards, administration, unions, and parents; providing administrators and staff members with the skills and competencies needed for successful collaboration; and developing models, frameworks, structures, and processes for collaboration within schools. Respondents also strongly agreed (6.7) with the second goal of creating partnerships between the school, home, and community. They rated the objectives of creating frameworks, structures, and processes for collaboration between the school and home and between the school and the community as very important (6.6) as well.

Instruction/Support Services

Recognizing the need for an effective and integrated system of instruction and support services to address the individual needs of all students, participants specified seven goals. With respect to curricula/student services, respondents were in high agreement (6.5) with the goals that include the identification/creation of curricula and support services to meet the needs of a diverse student population in both general and special education. The objectives associated with this goal were rated as very important (6.5). They included the identification of desired outcomes and the modification of existing curricula and services to address desired outcomes; the preparation of students for the transition to employment, independent living, and post-secondary training or education; the integration of curricula/services into

meaningful educational experiences for all students and the development of specialized curricula/services for diverse learners.

With respect to learning environment, respondents highly agreed (6.6) with the goal of providing general education environments that are conducive to learning for all students. They rated three objectives as very important (6.6). The objectives were to identify the environmental needs of students, match those needs to an appropriate learning environment, train and support staff in order to implement and adapt programs/services in a variety of learning settings.

With respect to instructional approaches, respondents highly agreed (6.7) with the goals of applying instructional strategies to enable all students to learn; developing specialized educational procedures/methodologies, and utilizing support services to enable all students to benefit from instruction. Objectives that included ongoing staff development to ensure that staff members have the competencies to meet the needs of diverse learners and to apply effective instructional skills, techniques, and strategies to teach all learners were rated as very important (6.7).

In the area of technology, respondents were also in high agreement (6.4) with the goal of utilizing a variety of technologies to maximize learning. Respondents rated the objectives associated with these goals as very important (6.6). They included the identification and location of technological resources that exist to serve the identified needs of students and the training of staff in the appropriate utilization of technology.

There were also several goals and objectives within the remaining areas of concern, not identified as priorities, that are worthy of comment. In area of Mandates, there was the recognition that differential mandates within and between agencies fractionalize services to students and families. While the goal of integrating the services of all agencies was rated as one of the highest (6.6) in

importance, there was less importance (6.1) placed on the objectives designed to meet that goal. These objectives included designing a plan for comprehensive services for each student, insuring that each student has equal access to all services, and reviewing the mission statements of all impacted agencies. While agreement with the second goal, combining categorical programs in schools to serve a broader population was rated 6.2; its one objective--ensuring that each student receives needed educational services--was rated highest (6.9) in importance among all the 139 objectives contained in the Plan of Action. There was also high agreement (6.3) with the goal of mandating adequate and equitable noncategorical funding for comprehensive services to all students and consistency in the relatively high rating of the importance (6.4) of the accompanying objectives. These included identifying funding sources, instituting the concept of the *money following the student*, minimizing competition among agencies for limited funds, identifying new sources of funding, providing adequate funding, and setting funding priorities. The final issue within Mandates focused on reasonable educational mandates. Respondents were in less agreement (5.7) with the goal of simplifying/reducing present mandates and extending them to all students than with any other goal within this topic. Yet, the objectives that accompanied this goal were considered very important (6.5). These objectives included: identifying all present mandates, eliminating redundant mandates, eliminating mandates that detract from the delivery of services, and enforcing all mandates equally across all programs. Despite the fact that respondents believed these objectives to be more important than all others in the entire Plan of Action, there seems to be genuine concern regarding the elimination of mandates that ensure services to students in need.

There are also several interesting observations to be made in the last area of concern within this topic: family/staff involvement. Respondents believed that the objectives associated with the goal of creating equal partnerships between staff and

families were important (6.4). These objectives included: providing information to parents and staff, enabling parents and staff to work together to make recommendations, and insuring that parents and staff work together to make decisions. Respondents were also in agreement with the goal of educating staff to become more understanding of families and family-related issues that affect education. Two objectives--educating staff in cultural issues and family dynamics and effective nonjudgmental listening and interviewing skills--were rated 6.4 in importance. Respondents were also in agreement (6.4) with the goal of providing opportunities for parents to be fully involved in their child's education and rated its two objectives as very important (6.2). The objectives were to provide a menu of options for family involvement and to provide flexibility of school/staff schedules. Finally, in this portion of the plan, respondents agreed with the goal of supporting families in accessing community resources (6.4). They also rated the objectives of collaborating with parent advocacy groups, making information immediately available to families, and training school staff to advocate on behalf of families with community service providers as very important (6.3).

Priority 3: Personnel Preparation

Personnel Preparation was rated as the third highest (6.2) priority among the five topics. Two areas of concern were selected as priorities within this topic: A. Preservice Education/Personnel Preparation and C. Teacher and Related Services Support.

Preservice Education/Personnel Preparation

Respondents strongly agreed (6.6) with the goals of preparing all teachers to become learning generalists prior to specializing; examining and revising (when necessary) knowledge, attitudes, and competencies necessary for all potential teachers; and defining criteria that will be used to measure competencies. They also agreed with the goals of preparing administrators to meet the requirements of

leadership in the area of special education. Respondents considered the following objectives to be very important (6.6): reorganizing existing curricula and delivery systems at undergraduate and graduate levels, ensuring that preservice curricula foster understanding of diversity, and requiring that all preparation programs for administrators include coursework and other activities to meet the requirements of leadership in the area of special education.

Teacher and Related Services Support

Respondents recognized the need for comprehensive support of general, special, and related services staff to receive ongoing training in the use of innovative intervention/instructional strategies. They were in high agreement (6.4) with the goals in this area and considered the objectives to be very important (6.2). The first goal was to provide a faculty and ancillary staff that are current in knowledge and methods for working with all students (rated 6.4 in agreement). Staff members include: speech/language therapists and pathologist, psychologists, occupational and physical therapists, social workers, medical staff, general and special education teachers, home economists, foreign language teachers, paraprofessionals, tutors, and vocational education teachers. Objectives (rated 6.2 in importance) included providing specialized instruction to all school personnel in behavioral management techniques, interdisciplinary issues, educationally related technology, new populations, transition planning, and policy/legal and placement issues. A second goal (rated 6.4 in agreement) was to develop an understanding of roles and responsibilities among general, special, and related services staff. The objective (rated 6.4 in importance) was to create opportunities for each group to have experiences that provide for an understanding of both of the other two areas. A third goal (rated 6.4 in agreement) was to provide comprehensive and ongoing training programs for paraprofessionals and tutors working directly with students with all exceptionalities. The objective (rated 6.2 in importance) was to train

paraprofessionals and tutors to use teacher developed behavioral management techniques, skill reinforcement, instructional materials, and data collection. A fourth goal (rated 6.4 in agreement) was to increase communication and awareness among schools, homes, and communities. The objectives (rated 6.2) were to improve the education of the students by utilizing home-, school-, and community-based knowledge of the student and to enhance school, home, and community knowledge of each others' policies and procedures.

Neither of the remaining areas of concern (B. Personnel Selection and Recruitment, D. Inservice, and E. Certification) nor their goals and objectives were considered as priorities for consideration or implementation. Thus, the message may be that, for presently employed personnel, content deserves greater consideration than the way in which it is delivered (process).

Priority 4: Student Population

Within this topic, rated as the fourth in overall priority (6.1), there were two goals that were rated as priorities by respondents. The first was to continue to serve students identified under present federal and state regulations (rated 6.7 in agreement); and, the second, to establish a process to empower local districts to serve students who are at risk (rated 6.3 in agreement). There was one objective associated with each goal. To reach the goal of continuing service to students identified under federal and state regulations, the objective was to define and clarify the population to be served under federal and state regulations (rated 6.5 in importance). To reach the second goal, that of serving "at-risk" students, the objective was to define local/state guidelines for identifying this population (rated 6.3 in importance). Respondents were in less agreement (5.2) with the goal of establishing clear parameters for identifying and serving students who are gifted and talented; they also considered the objectives of clarifying who is gifted and talented and designing a service delivery model for these students as less important (5.1) than all other

goals and objectives, respectively. Clearly, there was the perception among the participants that this population is a lower priority within special education.

Priority 5: Student Outcomes

Of the two areas of concern within this topic, only one was identified as a priority--A. The lack of consensus on educational outcomes: whether they should be the same for all students. Respondents were in high agreement (6.4) with the goal of clarifying how the goals of the State Board of Education (SBE), Common Core of Learning (CCL), and America 2000 reflect desired outcomes for individuals with disabilities. They also considered the three objectives associated with this goal to be very important (6.0). The objectives were to determine how the goals of SBE, CCL, and America 2000 address the extremes of the student learning spectrum, the outcomes throughout a student's lifespan, and working toward independence and desired quality of life. It would seem that it is more important to clarify what outcome measures should be and different approaches that may be appropriate than emphasizing and rationale and methods for assessing student outcomes (Area of Concern B).

SYMPOSIA RECOMMENDATIONS

The quantitative and qualitative evaluation data provided by Symposia participants strongly support several recommendations. The strategies and resources for addressing these tasks are outlined in detail in the Plan of Action (See Appendix D).

1. Change is possible through a bottomup systemic statewide process.

A diverse, yet representative, group of individuals came together for a common purpose. They acknowledged their diversity, addressed complex issues, and reached consensus. The process developed for the Connecticut Symposia provided both the structure and flexibility to allow the participants to reach their goal—a Plan of Action for the next century. This process should serve as a model for future change initiatives.

2. Funding is the primary concern.

In order to address the goals of the Plan of Action; flexible, programmatic, and student-based funding formulas that provide greater local discretion and agency collaboration are needed. Factors that presently impede integrated and comprehensive service delivery that is student-centered, family-focused, and community-based must be investigated. Funding formulas must allow special education and related services personnel to serve students with disabilities in general education classrooms and support general education interventions for these students as well.

3. Every student is entitled to appropriate educational services.

The intent is to serve all students well; yet, the process remains less clear. The Plan of Action suggests the need to rethink the implementation of current mandates and service delivery systems.

4. Students identified under current special education mandates must be served.

The gains that have been made in delivering services to students with special needs must not be undermined. Services guaranteed by current

federal and state mandates must be ensured. Categories of disability should be retained to protect mandated services for students with disabilities.

5. Categories of disability are not relevant to service delivery.

Labeling programs, teachers, or classrooms is not productive educational practice. Service delivery should be based on instructional need as specified by the goals and objectives in Individual Educational Plans. Assessment of each student's strengths and weaknesses, not categorical factors, should determine service delivery.

6. An increasingly diverse population of at-risk students must also be served.

Educators in general and special education must collaborate to better serve students who are at-risk of not prospering in the education system and for whom services are not currently mandated. Mechanisms for collaboration between general and special education must be enhanced in order to foster effective programming for these students.

7. Preservice preparation must provide integrated programs in which general, special, and related services personnel are prepared to serve all students by working collaboratively throughout their training.

Coursework and experiences must first provide all personnel with competencies as generalists prior to developing competencies as specialists. Administrators must have coursework and experience in working with students who are at-risk, disabled, and representative of the increasing diversity in schools.

8. New partnerships are needed to deliver services more effectively.

Collaboration within and across agencies, universities, schools, classrooms parents, communities, and the State Department of Education must be facilitated.

9. What's already working must be recognized and more broadly implemented.

It cannot be said that Plan of Action goals and objectives are unrealistic because most are already being implemented in various schools, colleges, and agencies throughout the State. There are many successful models and programs that should continue and can serve as strategies and resources for service delivery in the future. Collaborative consultation, team teaching, teacher assistance teams, professional development center partnerships, and cross-agency/school district initiatives have proven to be effective models that deserve extensive replication throughout the State.

10. The Plan of Action must be implemented immediately.

In order to be ready to meet the needs of all students in the next century, the Plan of Action requires immediate attention. Implementation by the State Department of Education and other State agencies will be fostered by the broad constituency represented in the Symposia Steering Committee.

11. General education must be involved in future planning and implementation of the Plan of Action.

The Connecticut Symposia was an opportunity for those directly concerned about students with special needs to address the critical issues facing special education and come to consensus. It is now critical to extend this process to a broad range of general education personnel—classroom teachers, principals, parents, superintendents, and agency representatives. The implementation of the Plan of Action will require new initiatives involving extensive dialogue with general education personnel.

12. General and special education must work collaboratively to define outcomes that are relevant for all students.

School reform initiatives, such as America 2000, may encourage elements (e.g., national curriculum, standardized testing, and higher graduation requirements) that may have a negative impact on students with disabilities or other learning differences. Solutions that are equitable for students, regardless of their place on the academic continuum, must be determined collaboratively by all educators. Special education personnel must be active participants in the school reform movement.

Conclusion

Our primary concern has been to identify how the field can work with other constituencies to address the needs of all students who are at-risk, both now and in the 21st Century. It is hoped that both the Symposia process and its product--the Plan of Action--will encourage others to use the prospect of a new century as an opportunity to take a proactive stance in facing and attempting to solve complex issues in education. It is hoped that the lessons learned and the quality of the product will serve as a template so other regions, states, or constituencies can replicate this approach to systemic change. Although debate, research, and information dissemination are encouraged; we believe it is time for schools, colleges, state agencies, professional organizations, and advocacy groups to seek solutions collaboratively. The alternative to working together to develop productive consensus is to allow others to determine the future of special education.

Appendix A
Project Timeline
(as of 4/91)

Project Timeline

Activities	Completion Date
Select Experts (Topics 1 - 4)	1/31/91
Select Reactors (Topics 1 - 4)	2/15/91
Select Participants	2/28/91
Experts (Topics 1 & 2) submit papers	3/31/91
Select Symposia site	3/31/91
Invite Participants	3/31/91
Distribute Expert Papers (Topics 1 & 2) to Reactors	4/1/91
Reactors (Topics 1 & 2) submit papers	4/15/91
Select Expert (Topic 5)	4/15/91
Experts (Topics 3 & 4) submit papers	4/15/91
Distribute Expert Papers (Topics 3 & 4) to Reactors	4/22/91
Select Reactors (Topic 5)	5/1/91
Reactors (Topics 3 & 4) submit papers	5/1/91
Distribute Expert and Reaction Papers (Topics 1 & 2) to Participants	5/1/91
Conduct Symposium 1 (Topics 1 & 2)	5/9/91
Distribute Expert and Reaction Papers (Topics 3 & 4) to Participants	5/9/91
Conduct Symposium 2 (Topics 3 & 4)	5/23/91
Conduct Symposium 3 (Topics 1 - 4)	6/6/91
Distribute results of Symposium 3 to Participants	6/22/91
Distribute results of Symposia 1 - 3 to Expert (Topic 5)	6/22/91
Expert (Topic 5) submits paper	8/7/91
Distribute Expert Paper (Topic 5) to Reactors	8/15/91
Reactors (Topic 5) submit papers	8/31/91
Distribute Expert and Reaction Papers (Topic 5) to Participants	9/15/91
Conduct Symposium 4 (Topic 5)	9/26/91
Conduct Symposium 5 (Topics 1 - 5)	10/17/91
Produce Monograph	12/31/91
Finalize Action Plan	12/15/91
Distribute final Symposia products and Action Plan to Participants and Connecticut constituencies for review and feedback	1/15/92
Distribute final symposia products and Action Plan to national constituencies for review and feedback	1/31/92
Synthesize feedback	Spr. 1992
Submit Action Plan to State Department of Education	6/30/92

Appendix B

**Project Participants
Facilitators/Group Leaders
Steering Committee**

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Stamford Public Schools

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Nancy Berger

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Appendix C

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Appendix D
Plan of Action

Group I: Population To Be Served

Definition: Special Education students will continue to be served under Public Law 94-142 and CGS 10-76 Statutes. In addition to that population, all educators will collaborate to serve students who are at risk of not prospering in the education system. Examples include, but are not limited to: those who learn slowly, those with behavioral/medical problems, those who may be educationally disadvantaged, and those who are gifted and/or talented.

Assumption: There is a need for collaboration between special and general education in order to better serve non-mandated at-risk students.

Students Who Are At-Risk of Not Prospering:

Physical/Medical

- Chronic health and medically fragile
- HIV/AIDS at risk
- Substance abusers
- Congenitally exposed to substance abuse
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Students in need of crisis intervention

Environmental

- Homeless
- Substance abusers
- Congenitally exposed to substance abuse
- Children of dysfunctional families
 - 1. abuse/neglect
 - 2. divorce
 - 3. behavioral problems
 - 4. attention-seeking
 - 5. reactive depression
- Children of poverty
- Latchkey children
- Truants and dropouts
- Juvenile delinquents
- Students in need of crisis intervention

Cultural

- LEP (limited English Proficiency)/Culturally Diverse
- Students in need of crisis intervention

Educational

- Gifted/talented
- Students in need of crisis intervention
- Birth - three population
- Adult learners/lifetime learners
- Slow learners
- Truants/dropouts

Topic I: Population to be Served

Area of Concern: A. Scope of the population to be served

Rationale: There is a need to define the wide range of students whose needs have an impact on their ability to benefit from *general* education.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Clarification of current mandated populations	a. To continue to serve students identified under PL 94-142 and CGS 10-76	(1) To define and clarify the population to be served under PL 94-142 and CGS 10-76	(a) Revisit definitions of "disabling" categories in order to provide clarity (b) Establish criteria that can be consistently applied for purposes of diagnosis (c) Identify a system of service delivery based on need rather than "category" or "label"	- A panel of "experts" in the area of special education with emphasis on interpreting federal definitions, time and money. - A multidisciplinary panel of diagnosticians to develop "best" assessment practices. - Time and money	short term and ongoing
2. Provision of mandated services for students who are gifted and talented	a. To establish clear parameters for identifying and serving students who are gifted/talented	(1) To clarify who are gifted/talented students for the purposes of providing services (general/special education) (2) To design a service delivery model for students who are gifted/talented	(a) Establish a committee of knowledgeable professionals to investigate and define criteria for identification and service provision (b) Solicit community input. (c) Explore the collaborative use of general and/or special education in the delivery of services to students who are gifted and talented.	- Professionals (including but not limited to): - CT Educators Network for Talented and Gifted (CENTAG) - CT Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) - Department of Education - Art Council - Parents - UConn - Adequate Funding - Special instructional programs including but not limited to cooperative learning, Talents Unlimited, etc	short-term
3. Identification of who is "at risk"	a. To establish a process to empower local districts to identify students who are "at-risk"	(1) To define local/state guidelines for identifying students who are "at-risk"	(a) Provide resources and technical assistance to LEA's in developing local guidelines (b) Explore the collaborative use of special education and/or regular education in the identification of students who are "at-risk"	- Dept. of Education - LEA teams/Committee - Community social and health agencies - Pre-referral strategies - Curriculum based assessment - Collaborative consultation - Other alternative identification procedures	short term

Topic II: Student Outcomes

Area of Concern: A. The lack of consensus on whether educational outcomes should be the same for all students

Rationale: Connecticut has separate systems for general and special education while research indicates that students are more alike than different and that all students can learn.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Appropriateness of State Board of Education Goals (SBE), Common Core of Learning (CCL) and nationally determined goals of America 2000 for all children	1. To clarify how the goals of the SBE, CCL and America 2000 reflect desired outcomes for individuals with disabilities.	(1) To determine how the goals of SBE, CCL and America 2000 address the extremes of the student learning spectrum. (2) To determine how the goals of SBE, CCL and America 2000 address the outcomes for a student's lifespan. (3) To determine how the goals of SBE, CCL and America 2000 address working toward independence and desired quality of life.	(a) Analyze the goals of the SBE, CCL and America 2000 to develop consensus on their appropriateness for all students. (b) Define the interim as well as long-term goals relative to SBE, CCL and America 2000. (c) Refine the goals of the SBE, CCL and America 2000 to respond to unique issues related to students at the extremes of the learning spectrum. (d) Gather all existing resources including curricula, linking goals and objectives to the CCL, SBE, and America 2000 goals. (e) Determine degree of synchronicity between existing resources and goals of SBE, CCL and America 2000. (f) Establish consensus. (g) Suggest refinements or additions to SBE, CCL, American 2000 documents.	1. Task Force I to be composed of stakeholders to include representatives of: Symposia on Special Education in the 1st Century Business Parents Churches Unions Community groups Teachers Students Legislators Adult service providers 2. Funding to support Task Force I efforts including personnel to conduct surveys, summarize and analyze information. Note: All Task Force Groups to be composed of stakeholders who also have the expertise to address the assigned objectives.	1992-

Topic II (cont.)

Area of Concern: B. Reasons and methods for assessing student outcomes

Rationale: It is extremely difficult to ascertain outcomes for complex issues (i.e., human behavior); and yet many offer simplistic solutions (i.e., standardized testing).

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Clarification of the purposes of assessment	a. To delineate the reasons for measuring student outcomes	(1) To define the stakeholder questions that need to be answered (2) To determine the educational reasons for measuring student outcomes (3) To determine the political reasons for measuring student outcomes (4) To determine the financial reasons for measuring student outcomes (5) To determine the societal reasons for measuring student outcomes	(a) Develop position papers (b) Conduct Symposia to present position papers (c) Conduct Symposia to focus on solutions (d) Promote promising practices and model program grants	- Task Force I to be composed of stakeholders (See Task Force I) - Computer searches, interviews, promising practices, etc.	1992-1993 1992-1993 1993-1994 1994

Topic II (cont.)
Area of Concern B (cont.)

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
2. Development of a response to stakeholder concerns regarding student outcomes	a. To define appropriate indicators to respond to the questions related to outcomes b. To delineate the specific measurement techniques and tools to assess the indicators c. To align measurement tools and techniques to curricula and activities	(1) To develop consensus relative to indicator appropriateness to assess outcomes (e.g. Connecticut Mastery Testing to assess the reading skills of a student with learning disabilities) (2) To identify existing measures (e.g. adequacy of CMT and proposed affective measures) (3) To determine the validity/reliability of specific measurement instruments to assess specified indicators (4) To develop new (qualitative and quantitative) measures (5) To improve measurement of IEP and ITP goals and objectives	(a) Review the activities of the State Department's Academic Outcomes, Attitudes and Attributes Committee (b) Involve stakeholders in review of outcome measures (c) Use research professionals to assist in achieving Objectives 3-5	* Task Force II Subcommittee * Measurement and research specialists	1992 - 1995
3. Aggregation and dissemination of outcome data	a. To delineate ways to aggregate data and disseminate information concerning results and effective indicators	(1) To define appropriate data units (i.e. standard scores, behavioral observations) (2) To define appropriate report formats: *testing *student portfolio *pre/post video/audio *assessment	(a) Review the activities of the State Department's Academic Outcomes, Attitudes and Attributes Committee (b) Review existing data requirements of the SDE and LEA (c) Analyze appropriateness and accuracy of present data requirements (d) Refine present or create new data units and reporting formats	* Task Force II Subcommittee * Measurement and research specialists	1992 - 1995

Topic II (cont.)
Area of Concern B. (cont.).

[illegible]

Topic III: Service Delivery

Area of Concern: A. Mandates

Rationale: Differential mandates within and between agencies fractionalize services to students and families.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Agency jurisdictional boundaries	a. To integrate the services of all agencies	(1) To design a plan for comprehensive services for each student and to insure that each student has equal access to all services. (2) To review the mission statements of all impacted agencies	(a) Introduce legislation to remove agency boundaries. (b) Decentralize state agencies and establish regional, comprehensive agencies, composed of education and all human agencies (c) Establish school or system based (dependent on size) planning teams that include parents to plan appropriate programs for each student	* SPED - LEA. * Attorneys * Other agencies * Human service representatives * Legislative interpretation * All agency representatives * Training for school-based teams * Community involvement * Funds	July 1992- July 1993 July 1994- January 1995 January 1995 - July 1996
2. Programmatic boundaries within school system (i.e., Chapter L Sp Ed., Perkins Act)	a. To collapse categorical programs in schools to serve a broader population	(1) To insure that each student receives the needed educational services	(a) Establish a committee to design legislation on both a state and federal level that will provide adequate, equitable, noncategorical funding for education	* CT State Dept. of Education * CAFE * CONN-CASE * CEC	January 1992 January 1996
3. The lack of constitutional mandates for services other than education	a. To insure that each student has adequate health care, shelter, safety, food and education	(1) To identify minimum standards that provide adequate health care, shelter, safety, food, and education for each child (2) To insure that all agencies have equal requirements to provide necessary services	(a) Explore and implement UN Bill of Rights of Students (b) Write a Bill of Rights for Students in Connecticut	* UN Bill of Rights * Advocacy Groups * Funds	July 1992 - July 1993
4. Programmatic funding	a. To mandate adequate and equitable noncategorical funding for comprehensive services to all students	(1) To identify funding sources (2) To institute the concept of "money following the student" (3) To minimize competition among agencies for limited funds (4) To identify new sources of funding (5) To provide adequate funding (6) To set up funding administration	(a) Create a multi-agency task force to examine all relevant issues and make recommendations necessary to achieve each objective. 2. Create a CT SDE task force to examine all relevant issues and make recommendations necessary to achieve each objective	* CT SDE Lead Agency * Representatives from all agencies * Legal Advice * Funding	July 1992-1994

Topic III (cont.)
Area of Concern A (cont.)

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
5. Bureaucratic requirements	a. To reduce procedural requirements. b. To streamline data requirements.	(1) Simplify and reduce CT State Department of Education data requirements (e.g., ISIS, Dropout, etc.). (2) Simplify and reduce SDE accounting requirements. (3) Identify those procedural requirements that are necessary to insure property or liberty rights. (4) Rewrite agencies' procedural requirements. (5) Identify commonality of services among agencies. (6) Eliminate redundancy of services among agencies. g. Create new services as necessary.	i. Create a task force to examine all relevant issues and make recommendations necessary to achieve each objective.	• CT State Department of Education • Representatives from all agencies. • Funding information • Legislative information • Federal/State legal advice • Funding	July 1992-1994
6. Reasonable educational mandates	a. To simplify/reduce present mandates and extend them to all students.	(1) To identify all present mandates. (2) To eliminate redundant mandates. (3) To eliminate mandates that detract from the delivery of services. (4) To enforce all mandates equally across all programs.	(a) Create a CT State Department of Education task force to examine all relevant issues and make recommendations necessary to achieve each objective.	• CSDE • CAFE • CONNCASE	January 1992 - January 1994

Topic III (cont.)

Area of Concern: B. Collaboration

Rationale: Partnerships within and between schools and communities are needed to effectively meet the needs of a diverse student population.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Educational collaboration within schools	a. To form partnerships within schools to service all students. b. To create a collaborative service delivery model within schools that provides appropriate educational programs and services to all students	(1) To secure a commitment to collaboration from school boards, administrations, unions and parents. (2) To develop models, frameworks, structures, and processes for collaboration within schools.	(a) Discuss, plan and gain support for collaboration, e.g. through strategic planning, restructuring. (b) Conduct ongoing professional staff development to include, but not limited to, the following: *consultation skills *curriculum based assessment *learning styles *developmentally appropriate educational practices (c) Provide ongoing technical assistance for the implementation and monitoring of staff development activities regarding collaboration. (d) Create and/or utilize organizational strategies and structures that will support collaboration within the school: *school based management *teams grade level meetings *departmental meetings *teacher assistance teams *student study teams *professional committees *flexible use of staff *permanent substitutes *common planning time *flexibility in union contracts (f) Provide incentives to schools to be involved in collaboration models (RFP/grants to districts, flexible state and federal funding)	* CT State Dept. of Education. * SERC. * RESC's. * Universities * LEA Professional Development Committees * Consultants * Northeast Regional Laboratory * Policies, practices and visitations in other systems. * Flexible state and federal funding * Willing and knowledgeable staff (use coordinators/case managers) * RFP/grants to districts	ongoing

Topic III (cont.)
Area of Concern B (cont.)

2. Collaboration between the school and the total community.	a. To create partnerships among the school, home and community.	(1) To create frameworks, structures, and processes for collaboration to occur between the school and home. (2) To develop frameworks, structures, and processes for collaboration to occur between the school and the community.	(a) Refer to Area of Concern: Family/Staff Development. a) Solicit support from private industry to support community collaboration within the schools. b) Encourage public/private partnerships with joint educational goals, e.g. funding, vocational training, work skills, etc. c) Send RFP's and issue grants to districts implementing collaboration. d) Conduct seminars/symposia/ conferences between school/ home/community regarding best practices in collaboration. e) Train liaisons/case managers to share and coordinate information on the range and availability of services and how to access such services for students, schools and families.	• PTA's. • Parent Advocacy Groups. • Chambers of Commerce. • Local civic and special interest groups. • Industries. • Service agencies. • CT State Dept. of Education. • Federal government. • Other state agencies. • Professional groups.	
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Topic III (cont.)
Area of Concern C (cont.)

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
3 Instructional Approaches	a. To apply instructional strategies to enable all students to learn. b. To develop specialized educational procedures/ methodology to meet the learning needs of diverse learners. c. To effectively utilize support services to enable all students to benefit appropriately from instruction.	(1) To assure that all staff possess the competencies and attitudes to meet the needs of diverse learners. (2) To apply effective instructional skills, techniques, and strategies to teach all learners. (3) To provide for on-going staff development.	(a) Mandate training in the Connecticut Competency Instrument as part of an LEA's professional development/ teacher evaluation plan. (b) Train its district teachers in research-based educational models such as...Effective Schools, TESA, Design for Effective Instruction. (c) Continue to support and fund state mandated LEA professional development plans. (d) Continue to support state mandated CEU framework. (e) Mandate for LEA's to provide building based instructional support teams in all schools. (f) Mandate district provision for all LEA's to provide training in Collaborative Consultation at the building level. (g) Provide specific direction, leadership, training, and mandates to the entire educational community relative to the issue of Least Restrictive Environment.	- Connecticut Competency Instrument. - RESC's. - LEA's - SERC. - State Department of Education (Trainer of Trainers Model) - All appropriate student support service professional organizations.	ongoing ongoing 1992-1994 ongoing 1997-1995 1992-1995 ongoing
4 Technology	a. To utilize a variety of technology to maximize learning.	(1) To identify/locate the technological resources that exist to serve the identified needs of a student population. (2) To train staff in appropriate utilization of technology.	(a) Provide regional expositions and publicity relative to technological resources available to teachers and students. (b) Offer regional training to teachers, students and support staff in the utilization of technology in the classroom.	- CT State Department of Education - CONNSense. - SERC. - CEC and other affiliates - ConnCASE.	ongoing ongoing

Topic III (cont.)

Area of Concern: C. Instruction/Support Services

Rationale: An effective and integrated system of instruction and support services is needed to address the individual needs of all students.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Curricula/Student Services	a. To identify/create curricula to meet the needs of the diverse student population in the 21st Century. b. To identify/create support services, both general and special, to meet the needs of the diverse student population of the 21st century.	(1) To identify desired outcomes for populations served. (2) To review, modify, and adapt existing curricula /services to address the desired outcomes for all students. (3) To prepare students for the transition to employment, independent living, and post secondary training or education. (4) To integrate curricula/services into meaningful educational experiences for all students. (5) To develop specialized curricula/services appropriate to the needs of diverse learners.	(a) Train all Connecticut teachers and support staff in the Common Core of Learning. (b) Provide copies of the CCL for all education personnel. (c) Use the CCL/America 2000 goals as the framework for developing or modifying curricula. (d) Develop a collaborative model that links the school, home, community and private enterprise to assist in Transition Planning. (e) Use Trainer of Trainer's Model to use the CCL in curriculum development.	- Community Agency Participation - Universities - Local Education Agencies - Interagency agreements - CASSP Model - Consultants - CT State Department of Education - All appropriate student support services. - Professional organizations (i.e., CASP, CSCA, CASSW)	1. 1992-1993 2. ongoing 3. ongoing 4. ongoing 5. 1992-1993
2. Learning Environments	a. To provide environments that are conducive to learning for classroom students to the greatest extent possible.	(1) To identify the environmental needs of student populations. (2) To match needs of students to an appropriate learning environment. (3) To train and support staff to implement and adapt programs/services in a variety of learning settings.	(a) Create a process for assessing the needs of students relative to their home and community. (b) Provide teachers and support staff with training in alternative assessment procedures i.e., CBA, Portfolio Assessment, etc. (c) Provide training to teachers and support staff in developing a framework for linking assessment with instruction.	- Ecological Assessment Samples - Home Visits - Parent Interviews - Trainer of Trainers Model in CBA and other alternative assessment procedures.	ongoing ongoing ongoing

Topic III (cont.)

Area of Concern: D. Family/ Staff Involvement

Rationale:

Family and staff involvement is essential to positive outcomes. Parents are experts on their student and have much knowledge to share with educators in regard to their child's strengths, needs and achievements

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Parent Education	a. To educate families to become full participants in their child's education b. To educate families to become more understanding of staff and issues that effect education	(1) To provide a variety of educational programs for families (2) To involve parents in the design and implementation of these programs. (3) To provide training materials and programs in family's native language (4) To develop flexible scheduling. (5) To provide culturally relevant programs.	(a) Provide parents with information on school governance and how to access services (b) Use Media: videos, T.V., Radio, Newspapers (c) Provide parents with listings of local community and statewide services and support groups (d) Recruit translators for non-English speaking parents	• LEA's • Parent advocacy groups • SERC • RESC's • Adult service agencies • DMR • DRS • Community Groups • Community Groups (church, cultural) • Schools • Community groups • Colleges and Universities • Bargaining Union • CTA	ongoing
2. Decision making	a. To create equal partnerships between staff and families	(1) To provide information to parents and staff (2) To enable parents and staff will work together to make recommendations (3) To insure that parents and staff will work together to make decisions	(a) Provide conference time for parents and staff (b) Encourage parents to participate in each step of decision-making	• LEA resources including PTA's • Fund joint training • Funding for training of parents and of District staff (LEA resources including PTA's)	ongoing
3. Staff education	a. To educate staff to become more understanding of families and their issues which affect education in a multicultural environment	(1) To educate staff in cultural issues and family dynamics. (2) To educate staff in effective, nonjudgmental listening and interviewing skills	(a) Conduct workshops (b) Conduct preservice and inservice training	• State level translators available for meetings • Colleges/universities • Community organizations • Professional associations	ongoing
4. Family support systems	a. To make family support systems available	(1) To provide a variety of programs addressing family-identified issues such as sibling support, parent support, grandparent support, and transition support at all levels	(a) To involve parents in the design and implementation of these programs	• Community agencies (e.g. sibling network) • State organizations to agencies • National organizations • Early intervention and transition planning	ongoing

Topic III (cont.)
Area of Concern D (cont.)

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
5. Staff support.	a. To support staff in working effectively with families. b. Provide administrative support.	(1) To make available to staff a menu of support systems from which to choose. (2) To provide ample time to consult/ collaborate. (3) To make school/community information and resources available and accessible. (4) To involve staff in decision making regarding school management - student class size.	(a) Design teacher contracts that will allow for collaborative planning time. (b) Promote site-based management. (c) Develop a statewide community resource base available to everyone.	- Support staff within the system. Training programs. Bargaining units. - CEA. - CEA - SERC. - CREC. - Hotlines. - Directory of Community Agencies - Ex. Manchester Public Health Dept. - Administrative and Bds. of Ed. support for site-based management.	ongoing

Topic IV: Personnel Preparation

Area of Concern: A. Preservice education/personnel preparation

Rationale: Overall, current preparation programs are inadequate to meet the needs of special education students in the 21st century.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
Separateness of professional preparation programs for general and special education	a. To prepare all teachers to become learning generalists prior to specializing in subjects or disability groups. b. To examine and revise (when necessary) knowledge, attitudes, and competencies necessary for all potential teachers, define criteria that will be used to measure competencies. c. To prepare administrators to meet the requirements of leadership in the area of special education.	(1) To reorganize existing curricula and delivery systems at undergraduate and graduate levels. (2) To ensure that preservice curricula foster understanding of diversity (e.g., alternative lifestyles, ethnic groups, varying family constellations, disabilities, etc.). (3) To require all preparation programs for administrators to include coursework and other activities to meet the requirements of leadership in the area of special education.	(a) Form an ongoing evaluation team with representation from all relevant departments involved in personnel preparation in such a way as to: Reorganize and modify coursework on the use of personnel to reflect a more integrated approach. Incorporate new course requirements for administrative personnel. (b) Formalize a process whereby a broad representation of higher education and public school personnel jointly and continuously organize preservice curricula in order to influence school practices. (c) Pilot and evaluate personnel preparation programs of varying lengths of time. (d) Link accreditation of preparation programs to a comprehensive infusion of diversity in preservice preparation. (e) Continue the use of current competency assessment instruments. (f) Reevaluate current assessment instruments and field test new assessment instruments as needed; assessment instruments to be grounded in cultural diversity and be bias free. (g) Continue the legislative commitment to the REST program. (h) Reinstate the initial funding levels for Core Training programs for Cooperating Teachers. (i) Initiate dialogue with the Advisory Committee for the Study of Graduate Programs for Teachers (Dept of Higher Ed.).	• State Department of Education. • State Department of Higher Education. • Universities. • IEAs. • Legislators. • RESCs. • Businesses. • Private Sector. • Endowment Agencies.	Initiate 1992 Assurance is needed that the process will continue in a timely fashion with the establishment of timelines by Steering Committee and through review process.

Topic IV (cont.)

Area of Concern: B. Personnel selection and recruitment

Rationale:

There is a need to attract and retain personnel who reflect diverse student populations and are adequately and properly prepared.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Lack of teachers and related services personnel who are: a) multilingual, b) male, c) representatives of minorities, and d) individuals with disabilities	a. To increase the number of adequately prepared personnel representing those diverse populations. b. To increase the number of adequately prepared related services personnel representing those diverse populations.	(1) To increase the number of secondary and postsecondary individuals who are: a) multilingual, b) male, c) representatives of minorities, and d) individuals with disabilities who go on to teaching and related service careers. (2) To develop and train more qualified related service personnel (e.g., Social Workers, Speech and Language Pathologists/Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Nurses, Psychologists, etc.).	(a) Provide career counseling. (b) Increase communication between the LEA and higher education regarding personnel. (c) Develop formal career awareness curriculum. (d) Provide incentives (i.e. scholarships). (e) Expand community awareness. (f) Provide career counseling. (g) Increase communication between the LEA and higher education regarding personnel. (h) Interface with Labor Dept. Job Services, JTPA, and other educational institutions. (i) Encourage high school/middle school students to work in special education programs with focus on minority student involvement and career goals. (j) Provide training for recruitment. (k) Review certification and/or licensing requirements for possible change.	• Programs that promote the achievement of a diverse and/or multicultural population. Examples include: TRIO, ConnCap, and Upward Bound Programs. • Model programs and incentives established through CT State Dept. of Education and DHE.	
2. Lack of financial assistance for postsecondary education and preparation.	a. To identify possible funding sources.	(1) Create funding sources to serve as recruitment incentives.		• Ex. Task Force IHE, DHE, & SDOR.	
3. Inconsistent inter-system teacher salaries/low salaries for some related services	a. To provide equity among disciplines.	(1) Revise salary schedules to ensure equity.		• Ex. Task Force IHE & SDOR.	

Topic IV (cont.)

Area of Concern: C. Teacher and related services support

Rationale:

Due to the wide range of exceptionalities, new methodologies, technology and limited resources, it is necessary for comprehensive support of regular/special education and related services staff to receive ongoing training in the use of innovative intervention/instructional strategies.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Need for specialized instruction for personnel already employed.	a. To provide a faculty and ancillary staff which are current in knowledge and methods for working with all students: - speech/language therapists - and pathologists - psychologists - occupational therapists - physical therapists - social workers - medical staff - general/special/bilingual teachers - physical education teachers - music teachers - art teachers - home economists - foreign language teachers - paraprofessionals - rumors - vocational education teachers	(i) To provide specialized instruction to all school personnel in: - behavior management techniques - interdisciplinary training - educationally related technology - new population such as crack babies, medically fragile, ADHD, dysfunctional families, etc. - transitional planning - policy/legal training - placement issues	(a) Provide technical assistance on new approaches. (b) Provide training in parent involvement. (c) Provide professional development. (d) Provide incentives (e.g., CEU's) (e) Implement peer coaching/team teaching. (f) Schedule interdisciplinary meeting times. (g) Develop a compilation of resources, information available within community, contact people, state technology hotline, professional organizations (h) Support interagency networking.	- RESOs - Universities - State Agencies (e.g., SERC, SDE, BRS) - Local district personnel	
2. Inadequate release time for training and meeting.	a. To provide mechanisms to encourage access to professional development for staff	(i) To develop alternatives for providing teachers with access to specialized programs and information.	(a) Provide funds for adequate staffing. (b) Restructure school day (c) Revise busing schedules (transportation issues) to allow or facilitate planning time		
3. Lack of understanding and/or expectations of roles and responsibilities among general education, special education, and related services staff.	a. To develop an appreciation for the diversity of roles and responsibilities among general, special, and related services staff	(i) To create opportunities for each group (general, special, and related services staff) to have experiences that will provide an understanding of each other's areas of expertise	(a) Provide regular team planning time (b) Facilitate observations of other disciplines (c) Support professional development		

Topic IV (cont.)
Area of Concern C (cont.)

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
4. Training for paraprofessionals/tutors	a. To provide comprehensive and ongoing training programs for paraprofessionals and tutors working directly with students with all exceptionalities.	(1) To train paraprofessionals and tutors to use teacher developed: • behavioral management techniques • skill reinforcement • instructional materials • data collection	(a) Support professional development activities. (b) Provide adequate time for consultation with appropriate professional development. (c) Provide incentives for professional growth. (d) Provide supervision.	• IHE's	
5. Need for communication and continuity of services among school, home, and community	a. To increase communication and awareness between school, home and community.	(1) To improve the education of the student by utilizing home-based, school-based, and community-based knowledge of the student. (2) To enhance school, home, community knowledge of each others' policies and procedures.	(a) Establish procedures for ongoing communication among the 3 groups. (b) Train staff and parents.	• Community agencies • Easter Seals • ARC • I.D.A., etc.	

Topic IV (cont.)
Area of Concern C (cont.)

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
4. Training for paraprofessionals/tutors	a. To provide comprehensive and ongoing training programs for paraprofessionals and tutors working directly with students with all exceptionalities.	(1) To train paraprofessionals and tutors to use teacher developed: • behavioral management techniques • skill reinforcement • instructional materials • data collection.	(a) Support professional development activities. (b) Provide adequate time for consultation with appropriate professional development. (c) Provide incentives for professional growth. (d) Provide supervision.	* IHE's	
5. Need for communication and continuity of services among school, home, and community.	a. To increase communication and awareness between school, home and community.	(1) To improve the education of the student by utilizing home-based, school-based, and community-based knowledge of the student. (2) To enhance school, home, community knowledge of each others' policies and procedures.	(a) Establish procedures for ongoing communication among the 3 groups. (b) Train staff and parents.	* Community agencies • Easter Seals • ARC • I.D.A, etc.	

Topic IV (cont.)

Area of Concern: D. Inservice

Rationale:

There is need for lifelong learning opportunities that are ongoing and contribute or result in systems development (e.g., think tank). Flexibility is required to respond to the changes in professional and personnel development.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Isolation - lack of communication within the school setting and between school and community.	a. To foster broader based inservice endeavors.	(1) To identify and involve a variety of diverse resources. (2) To ensure comprehensive professional development plans and other initiatives. (3) To incorporate ideas from inservice and forums into action plans that improve teaching/learning activities.	(a) Conduct forums to ensure representation of diverse perspectives (e.g., political, business, education and health). (b) Conduct inservice across discipline lines. (c) Conduct inservice activities in diverse settings.	* Government and business organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, insurance companies, local manufacturers). * IHE's.	
2. Insufficient follow-up, resources, and/or intensity to support implementation of inservice training.	a. To increase technical assistance relative to implementation of inservice activities.	(1) To encourage educators to apply skills/knowledge presented in inservice activities.	(a) Use trainer-of-trainers model. (b) Provide time to plan (across disciplines). (c) Provide release time for support staff. (d) Use peer coaching. (e) Provide evaluation and/or clinical supervision. (f) Research new and nontraditional models of inservice incentives.	* Funding.	
3. Insufficient incentives/recognition/structure or time for ongoing professional development.	a. To develop systems for providing incentives, recognition and time for professional development.	(1) To create additional methods to reinforce professional development.	(a) Modify current CEU system. (b) Modify current contract barriers to inservice activities. (c) Provide incentives and recognition.		
4. Inadequate inservice models to meet diverse needs of educators and related services personnel.	a. To create innovative models for ongoing professional development.	(1) To provide a variety of approaches to professional development within and across disciplines/related services.	(a) Continue viable activities: Self study groups Peer coaching Independent study/research, etc.		
5. Fragmentation and duplication within current systems hinder the quality of inservice.	a. To encourage collaboration and funding among systems providing inservice.	(1) To adapt current funding mechanisms to foster collaboration among school districts to provide inservice training. (2) To utilize local businesses, governments, and higher education personnel to address issues of mutual concern among all constituencies.	(a) Investigate funding sources. (b) Talk to local government, business, and IHE leaders.	* Grant Program Managers. * Community resources.	

Topic IV (cont.)

Area of Concern:

E. Certification

Rationale:

Rigid certification requirements restrict the effective utilization of staff and related service personnel in schools in meeting the diverse student need.

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Limitations of certification prevent effective utilization of staff.	a. To utilize staff capabilities to meet the needs of students more effectively b. To develop a foundational competency-based license with options for specialization in specific areas	(1) To deregulate certification requirements carefully and selectively. (2) To utilize nontraditional teaching personnel. (3) To develop a general teaching license with very specific specialties earned through on-the-job training and developed through specific coursework and demonstrated competencies. (4) To expand teaching competencies to include such things as the use of various instructional strategies and classroom management techniques development of critical thinking and problem solving skills.	(a) Expand staff development opportunities. (b) Establish processes (e.g., competency testing) to include equivalent experience and alternative activities for those seeking alternative routes). (c) Provide foundation courses for students in programs in other disciplines who are intending to work in the education profession.	• Input from organizations such as: SDOE, CAFE, IHE. • School based personnel at all levels.	

Topic V: Funding Models

Issues	Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources	Dates
1. Current educational funding mechanisms at both the federal and state level do not allow for collaborative partnerships, incentives, or flexibility in order to meet the diverse needs of a multidimensional population, at a time of escalating service requirements and diminishing resources.	a. Redefine funding formulas in order that decisions at the local level can be student and programatically based as opposed to faculty driven. b. To develop or enhance present educational formulas in order to allow for more local discretion in the utilization of funds.	(1) To convene a Task Force to: • enhance categorical funding based on an individual plan of service • support reimbursement of preventive strategies, early identification, and pre-referral interventions. • accommodate co-funding and commingling of categorical grant monies, i.e., Chapter I, Special Education • provide for current year reimbursement sent directly to the Board of Education. • support equity based on criteria of diversity of student population. • create incentives for intradistrict collaboration between special and general education, and interdistrict initiatives			
2. Current jurisdictional and bureaucratic funding requirements of other than educational agencies preclude the development of an integrated and comprehensive plan of service which is child-centered, family focused, and community based.	a. To examine all relevant issues which deter us from addressing the issue.	(1) To establish a multi agency Task Force to consider: • funding sources. • elimination of competition among agencies for limited funds. • identification of new sources of funding. • developing an awareness of available resources. • developing resources to the students in the least restrictive setting. • providing incentives for interagency cooperation in order to keep children in the community and bring services to the student. (2) Look at models for integrating services with emphasis on the school serving as a community site, and agencies coming to the schools (3) Consider developing a political action group			

GLOSSARY

ADHD	- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
America 2000	- President Bush's School Reform Plan
ARC	- Association for Retarded Citizens
BEST	- Beginning Educator Support and Training Program
BRS	- Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (formerly DRS, DVR)
CABE	- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
CASP	- Connecticut Association of School Psychologists
CASSW	- Connecticut Association of School Social Workers
CBA	- Curriculum Based Assessment
CCI	- Connecticut Competency Instrument
CCL	- Common Core of Learning
CEC	- Council for Exceptional Children
CENTAG	- Connecticut Educator's Network for the Talented and Gifted
CEU	- Continuing Education Unit
CMT	- Connecticut Mastery Testing
CONN-CASE	- Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education
ConnSense	- The University of Connecticut Special Education Technology Conference
CREC	- Capitol Region Education Council
CSCA	- Connecticut School Counselor Association
CSDE	- Connecticut State Department of Education
DMR	- Department of Mental Retardation
DOE	- Department of Education (U.S.)
DRS	- Department of Rehabilitation Services (now BRS)
IEP	- Individual Education Plan
IHE	- Institution of Higher Education
ISIS	- Integrated Special Student Information System
ITP	- Individual Transition Plan
JTPA	- Job Training Partnership Act
LDA	- Learning Disability Association
LEA	- Local Educational Agency
LRE	- Least Restrictive Environment
RESC	- Regional Education Service Center
RFP	- Request for Proposals
SBE	- State Board of Education
SERC	- Special Education Resource Center
TRIO	- Equal Opportunity Programs at the Postsecondary Level

Appendix E
Mission Statement

MISSION STATEMENT

We believe it is the right of every student to reach his/her maximum potential through the educational process. It is, therefore, our responsibility to provide an educational system in which the unique needs of each student are addressed in a viable, coordinated, efficient, and equitable way. The mission of the Connecticut Symposia on Special Education in the 21st Century is to create a vision for special education to follow within the educational system. We will develop a plan of action that will focus on the population to be served, student outcomes, service delivery, personnel preparation, and funding models. Within that plan, we will define areas of concern, goals and objectives. We will also identify strategies and resources that may be used to implement the plan in order to enhance the quality of life for those at risk for not prospering within the educational system.

Appendix F

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